

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Land at 19 WALNUT TREE ROAD, PIRTON, HERTFORDSHIRE
Proposed Development of 4 No. Detached Houses and New Access Road

1. Introduction

This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies a planning application for the residential development of land at 19 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton. The proposals comprise:

- The construction of 4 no. detached dwellings;
- The retention of the existing property;
- The creation of a new vehicular access road serving the development and the adjacent recreation ground, replacing the existing narrow track.

The scheme has undergone extensive refinement following discussions with North Hertfordshire Council under pre-application reference 25/01885/PRE, and through engagement with Hertfordshire Highways' pre-application service to inform the access and road design. The submitted design reflects officer advice and feedback from those processes.

The application is supported by a full suite of technical reports including heritage, archaeology, highways, trees, ecology, biodiversity net gain, and contamination.

2. Site and Surroundings

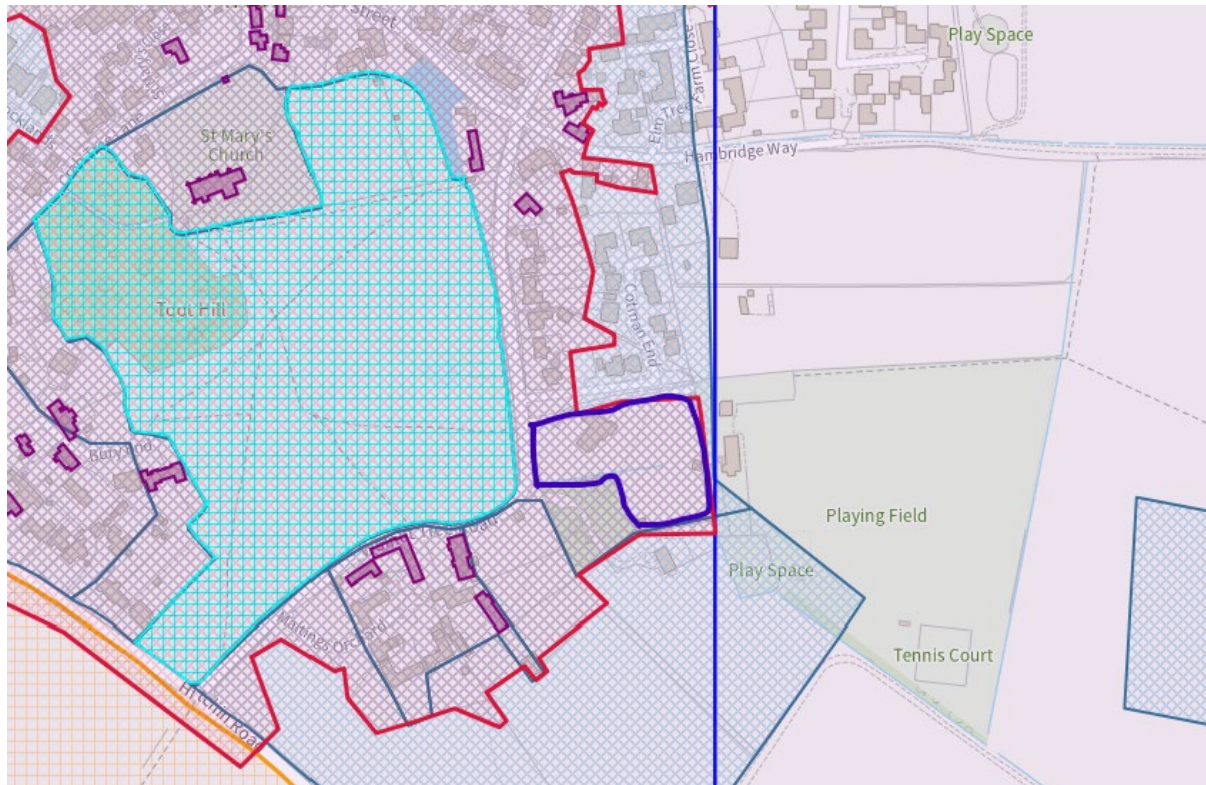
The site comprises the existing property at 19 Walnut Tree Road and its associated land extending eastwards towards the Pirton Recreation Ground. The land is generally level, partly grassed, and bordered by trees and hedgerows. The built form of the recently completed pavilion provides a transition from the village to the open countryside.

Most of the site lies within the Pirton settlement boundary, with a small portion at the southern corner lying outside. During pre-application discussions, officers confirmed that this small out-of-boundary area is appropriate for development due to its modest scale, limited visibility, and close relationship with the built form.



2.1 Conservation Area Context

The site is located within the Pirton Conservation Area, a designated area characterised by its rural setting, traditional building styles, and mature landscape features. Careful regard has been given to materials, scale, massing and landscape design to ensure the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



NHDC Planning map. The site is edged blue.

2.2 Scheduled Ancient Monument Context

On the opposite (western) side of Walnut Tree Road lies the nationally important Scheduled Ancient Monument at Pirton Bury, forming a significant heritage constraint. The proposed development sits on the eastern side of the road, separated by existing buildings and vegetation.

A full Heritage Statement concludes that the development will not harm the setting or significance of the Scheduled Monument.

2.3 Surrounding Area

The immediate surroundings comprise:

- Residential properties along Walnut Tree Road and Cotman End to the North;
- The Pirton Recreation Ground and Pavillion (under construction) to the east;
- Agricultural land beyond the village boundary;
- A mixture of historic and modern dwellings contributing to a varied built character.

2.4 Site Photos



Aerial photo of site from the West



Existing House and access road.



View down Walnut Tree Road looking North



View down Walnut Tree Road looking South



View from inside site towards Cotman End



View inside site looking towards SE corner



View towards eastern boundary (pavilion beyond)



View from southern corner of the site



Rear view of existing house



Aerial view from the East. The new pavilion for the recreation ground is in the foreground. While this is outside the settlement envelope, this provides a substantial built form

3. Planning History and Pre-application Advice

3.1 Council Pre-application Advice (Ref. 25/01885/PRE)

Key outcomes of discussions with North Herts officers include:

- Principle of development acceptable, with the majority of the site within settlement limits;
- Minor extension beyond the boundary acceptable based on context and containment;
- Improved access supported in principle due to the shortcomings of the existing track;
- Layout of 4 dwellings acceptable subject to revisions to reflect Conservation Area character. This has scaled back the original proposals for a total of 9 units with the existing house removed.
- Importance placed on landscaping, tree preservation, and traditional materials;
- Positive response to the use of heritage-led design principles.

3.2 Hertfordshire Highways Pre-application Engagement

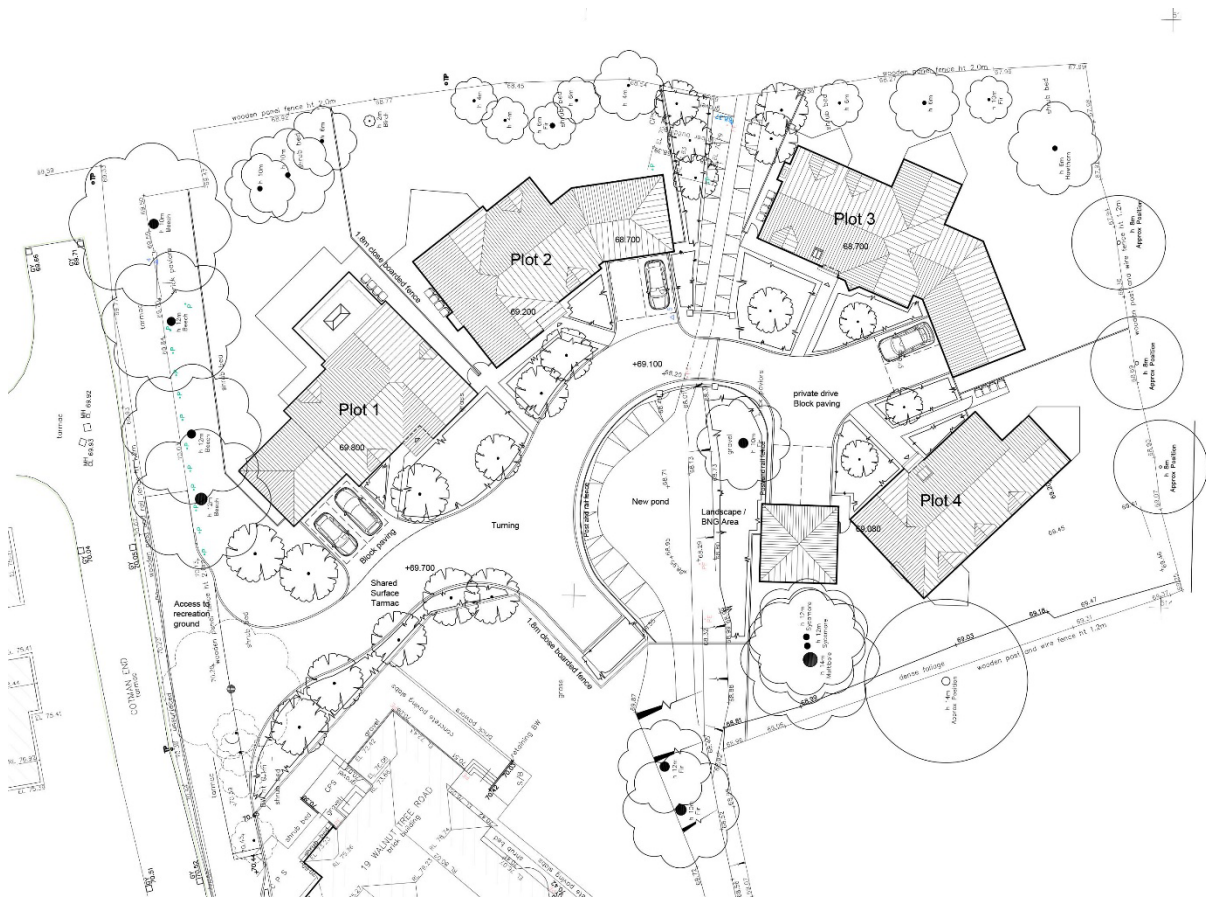
The road layout and junction design to Walnut Tree road, as well as the junction with the access to the recreation ground has been subject to pre-application advice from Herts Highways (Ref; NH/27086/2025). Following discussions and amendments, the submitted design has been agreed to be acceptable

4. The Proposed Development

4.1 Overview

The scheme includes:

- Four individually designed detached two-storey, four and five and bedroom houses;
- Use of traditional materials: red multi brick, clay plain tiles, and powder-coated aluminium windows;
- Generous gardens and soft landscaping, including reinstatement and enhancement of a pond;
- A landscaped internal access road built to modern standards;
- Retention of the existing dwelling with improved access;
- Improved arrangements for access to the recreation ground.



4.2 Layout

The site provides a new cul-de-sac accessed via the existing access to the recreation ground. A new junction is proposed where the access road meets Walnut Tree Road which enhances the safety at this junction. This is of particular public benefit as the most intensive use of this access is for the recreation ground in the event of sports and social events. These currently have to use a single track roadway.

The development itself is on a cul-de-sac off the access road, with a sinuous access road providing a turning space for refuse and emergency vehicles. A pond is provided at the centre of the site, which can form part of the surface water drainage strategy. This and the landscaping surrounding it provides a focal point for the development as well as provide the

biodiversity enhancements. Plots 1 and 2 are located on the eastern edge of the site. Plots 3 and 4 are in the southern portion.

The scheme provides:

- Appropriate spacing and separation distances along with retained boundary planting providing privacy to the site and neighbours.
- Generous rear gardens;
- New tree planting;
- A soft-edge transition towards the recreation ground.

4.3 Scale and Appearance

The architecture is explicitly informed by the Pirton Conservation Area, taking cues from:

- Vernacular roof pitches;
- Clay Plain tile and red brick material palette;
- Vertical window proportions;
- Modest porches and simple massing;
- Subtle, traditional detailing.

This ensures compatibility with the area's historic character while allowing for high-quality contemporary living with open plan living areas with large windows linking the house with their private gardens.



Above. Plots 1 and 2. Below. Plots 3 and 4



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation

5. Heritage and Conservation Area Considerations

A Heritage Statement and Archaeological Statement accompany the application. Key conclusions include:

- The development preserves and enhances the Pirton Conservation Area, through scale, massing and the traditional materials palette;
- Retention of existing large dwelling;
- No harm arises to the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Pirton Bury due to separation, existing screening and limited intervisibility;
- Archaeological potential is manageable and subject to standard mitigation if required;
- The development respects local character and reinforces the appearance of this part of the village.

6. Access and Highways



The existing track serving the site and recreation ground is narrow, poorly aligned and provides a substandard junction with Walnut Tree Road. The access is heavily used at weekends by sports teams using the recreation ground. The development provides an opportunity for an improved access, as well as provision for vehicles to pass more easily along the access road, reducing the need for them to stop on Walnut Tree Road during busy periods.

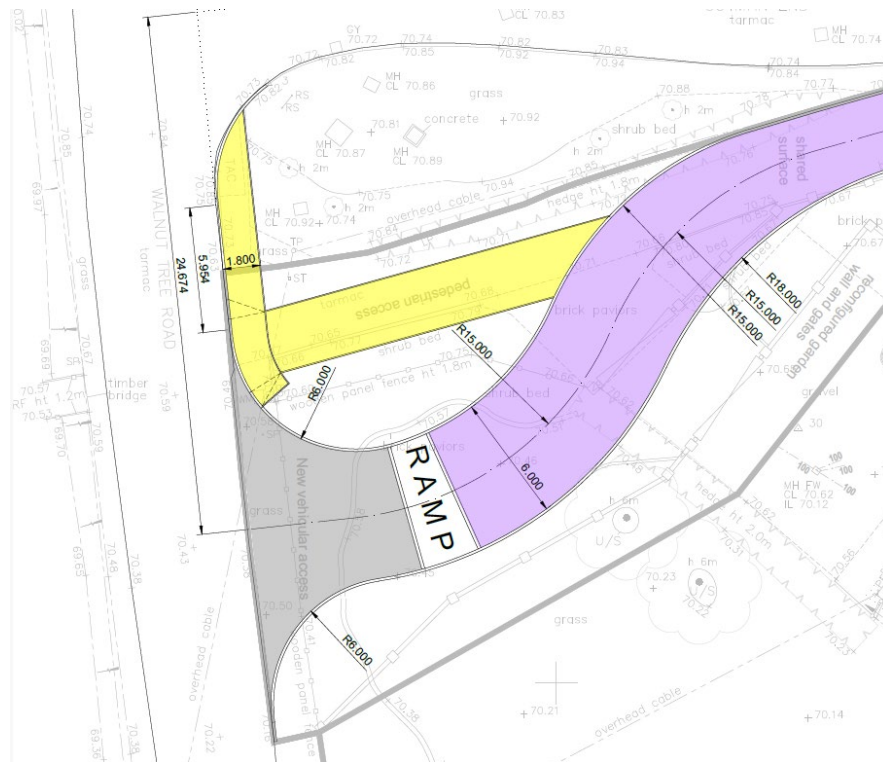
The proposed development includes:

- A new, purpose-built access road meeting highway standards;
- Improved visibility splays and safer junction geometry;
- Safer access for users of the recreation ground;
- Two-way vehicle movement capability;
- Incorporated turning for service and emergency vehicles;
- On-plot parking compliant with HCC guidance.

Overall, the development results in a significant highway safety improvement.

The proposals also maintain the pedestrian connection with the footpath on the opposite side of Walnut Tree Road through the Bury.

11 Parking spaces are provided. Two surface spaces for each house and allowance for one car in the garages. The garages are oversized to also make provision for bin storage and cycle storage.



Detail of new vehicular access onto Walnut Tree Road. The existing access is retained, providing continuity with the public footpath on the opposite side of the road and providing pedestrian access to the recreation ground

7. Landscaping and Trees

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment have been undertaken. The layout has been designed to retain the most important trees while enabling sustainable development.

The retention of existing trees, supplemented by new planting will:

- Reinforce the Conservation Area character;
- Enhance biodiversity;
- Improve visual amenity;
- Soften the edges of the development.

It is proposed to develop the soft landscaping once permission is in place to take into consideration the bio-diversity strategy as well as provide an attractive setting to the development.

The proposals include a central planted area and pond on the line of the current drainage ditch. This is intended to become an attractive focal point for the development.

8. Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain and Flooding

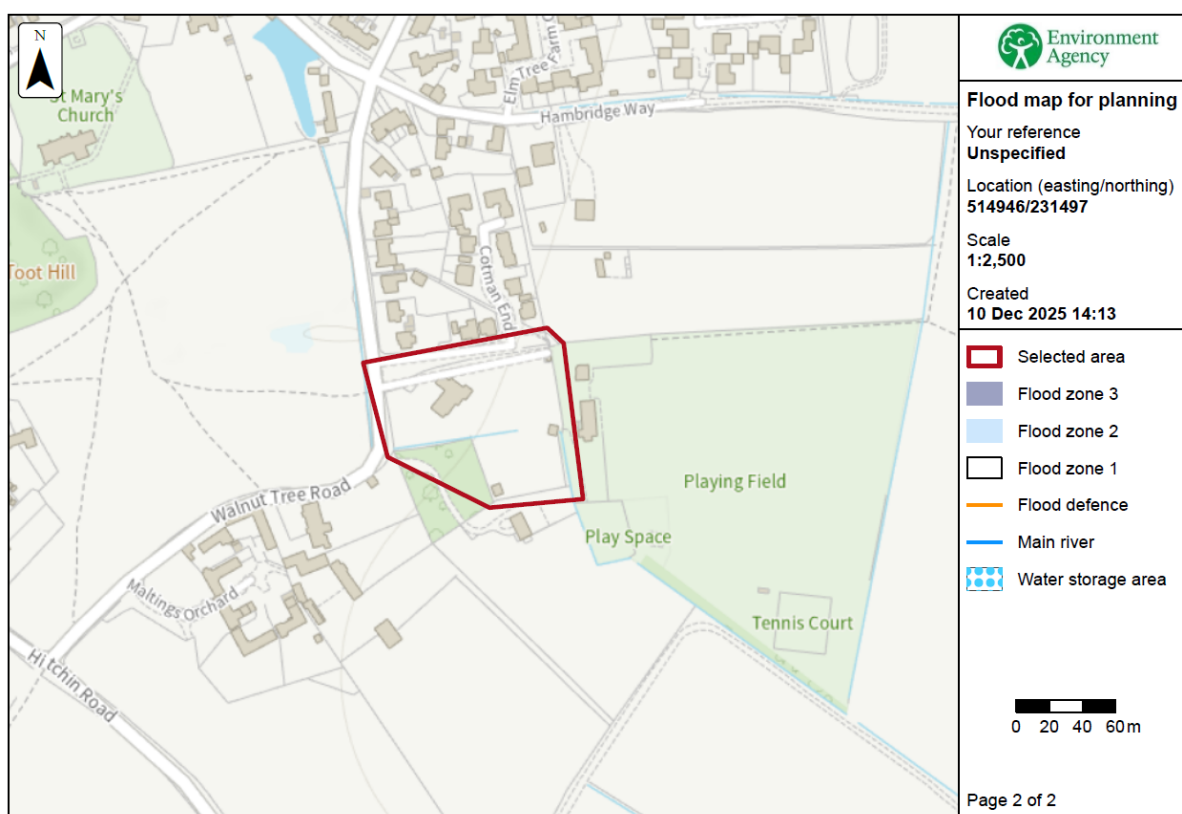
An Ecology Report identifies no significant ecological constraints. Opportunities for enhancement have been incorporated throughout the design and bird/bat boxes will be provided to the houses.

The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation demonstrates a gain comfortably in excess of 10%, achieved through:

- New planting and habitat creation;
- Strengthened boundary vegetation;
- Additional trees and species-rich grassland;
- Biodiversity-enhancing landscaping and pond.

This exceeds statutory and local policy requirements.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is of low risk of flooding.



9. Noise Considerations

A noise report is not submitted at this stage, as the new pavilion at the recreation ground is not yet operational. Once it is complete, a more accurate operational noise assessment can be undertaken.

However:

- Pavilion opening hours will be restricted under its permission;
- Any noise impacts are anticipated to be limited and manageable;
- Future mitigation, if required, typically includes enhanced acoustic glazing.
- Other than the recreation ground, the area is generally tranquil and quiet.

The site is therefore considered suitable for residential development from a noise perspective.

10. Amenity Considerations

The layout ensures:

- No harmful overlooking of neighbours through distance, site layout design and retained boundary planting;
- No unacceptable overshadowing or dominance;
- Spacious gardens and high-quality living environments;
- Safe and pleasant pedestrian and vehicle movement within the site.

11. Sustainability

Sustainable principles incorporated include:

- High-performance building fabric;
- Low-energy heating systems;
- Water efficiency;
- EV charging infrastructure;
- Sustainable drainage solutions;
- Walkable proximity to village services.

Please refer to the separate energy and sustainability statement for more details.

12. Planning Policy

This section summarises the key national and local policies relevant to the proposal and demonstrates how the scheme accords with each.

12.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The proposal represents sustainable growth within an established settlement.

Housing Supply

The scheme contributes to housing supply in a sustainable village location.

Good Design

Traditional materials and sensitive design ensure a high-quality built form.

Heritage Protection

The development conserves the Conservation Area and the setting of Pirton Bury. Refer to Heritage Assessment for further details.

Sustainable Transport

A new, significantly improved access meets NPPF requirements for safe and suitable access.

Natural Environment

A Bio-diversity net gain in excess of 10% is achieved; ecological interests are respected.

Contamination

Addressed via Phase 1 assessment.

12.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy

Development within Category A villages is supported. Small portion of site outside village envelope has officer support.

SP8 – Housing

The scheme delivers appropriate, small-scale housing.

SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Design responds positively to local character and sustainability objectives.

HE1 – Heritage Assets

Heritage statements confirm no harm; Conservation Area character preserved.

T1 – Sustainable Transport

The new access significantly improves safety and functionality.

T2 – Parking

Parking meets adopted standards.

NE1–NE4 – Landscape, Biodiversity, and Green Infrastructure

Landscape strategy, tree retention, and 10% BNG meet policy aims.

D1 – Sustainable Design

Energy-efficient detailing and sustainable construction respond to policy requirements.

We have engaged in positive discussions with both North Herts and Herts Highways officers to create a scheme that complies with local and national policy and provides an attractive development of homes in the village. The scheme has been developed to take on board comments and address issues raised during the pre-application process.

13. Technical Reports Submitted

This planning application is supported by the following technical documents:

- Heritage Statement
- Archaeological Statement
- Tree Survey & AIA
- Ecology Report
- BNG Calculation and report
- Highways Design
- Phase 1 Contamination Assessment
- Energy and Sustainability Statement

These collectively confirm that the site can be developed safely, sustainably, and sensitively.

14. Conclusion

The proposed development of 4 detached dwellings at 19 Walnut Tree Road represents a sensitive, well-designed and policy-compliant addition to Pirton. It:

- Respects and enhances the Pirton Conservation Area;
- Causes no harm to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- Provides high-quality homes in a sustainable and established village location;
- Delivers a significant improvement to highway safety;
- Achieves minimum 10% BNG and strengthens local landscape character;
- Addresses all technical matters appropriately;
- Reflects the outcome of constructive discussions with planning and highway officers.

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Pentangle Design Group