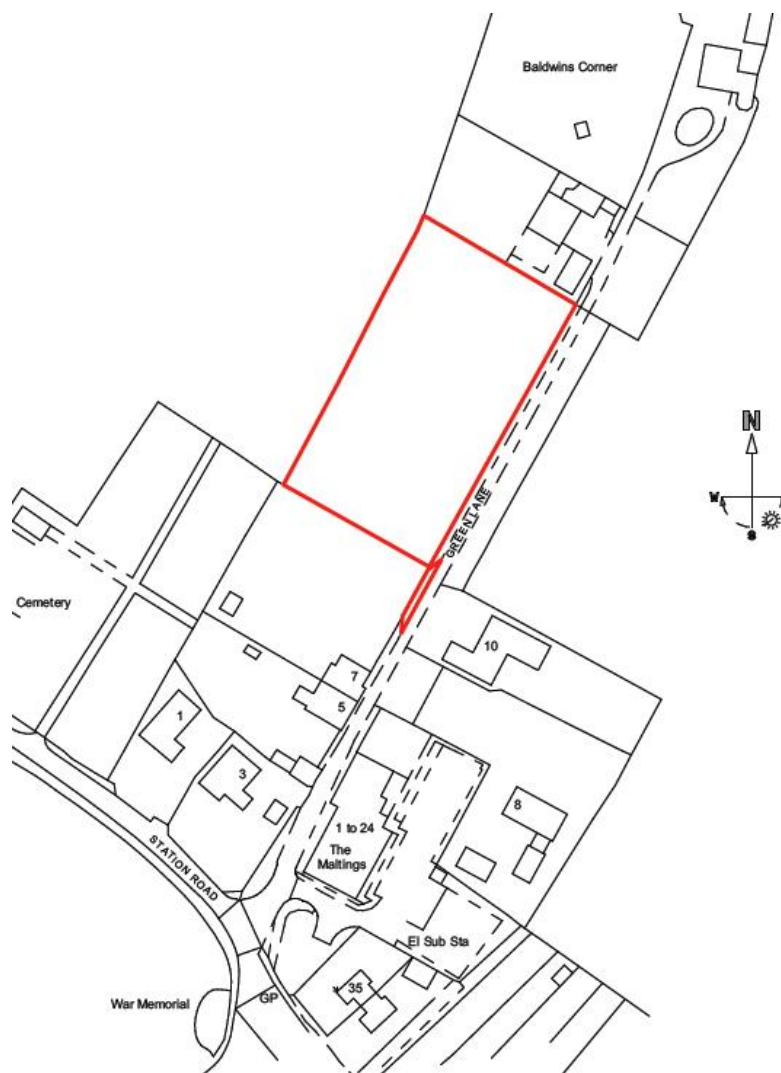


Design & Access Statement for Land at Green Lane, Ashwell (September 2024)



Background and Context

The site is located to the West of Green Lane, Ashwell and comprises maintained grass and trees forming part of a large private rear garden to an existing property (no. 7 Green Lane). It measures 0.3ha, falls within the settlement boundary and is not located within a conservation area.



Site Location Plan (NTS)

The site is surrounded by arable agricultural fields to the north, east and west of Green Lane. The proposal site is approximately 100m from the junction with Station Road and is within walking distance of the village centre with local shops and facilities.

The garden boundaries to number 7 Green Lane and Green Lane itself have a variety of trees along them; some specimen and many self-seeded with the majority lining the edge of Green Lane. Immediately to the north of the site are some small metal clad agricultural storage buildings.

The site has an existing vehicular access with a gate approximately halfway along its boundary with Green Lane which has been used for many years mainly to allow access for the maintenance of the garden.

Green Lane is an unadopted, gravel topped, road which varies in width between 3-5.5m and acts as a shared surface for vehicles and pedestrians. Beyond the converted Maltings building near to Station Road there are six other detached and semi-detached dwellings served by Green Lane. The vehicle and pedestrian traffic is very low; a detailed traffic analysis is provided with this application by a specialist transport consultancy, i-Transport.



Junction of Green Lane and Station Road



View northwards of Green Lane and The Maltings



View of Green Lane looking Northwards

The Design

The design language of the village of Aswell is very varied in terms of its dwelling styles, forms and materials having grown from its early beginnings as a village through its main growth period in the 1800's until the present day. The majority of dwellings are two-storey of varying heights, there are also single storey homes and two-storey houses with dormers in the roof space mainly in the village centre.

The scheme has evolved over time, taking into account the context and location of the site together with guidance given in the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan and the Village Design Statement where applicable, namely:

- *the scale of the new development should be in keeping with existing buildings;*

- *there should be a good balance between buildings and open or green spaces, including gardens;*
- *the density of new development should be carefully considered and should reflect the density of development that surrounds the development area; and*
- *the development should respect the characteristics of the area of the village where it is taking place.*
- *Ashwell is an attractive village with a rich variety of building styles and materials. No single style predominates. The old and the new generally intermingle harmoniously. The variety of shapes and styles in the High Street represents the way the village has developed over time. The buildings are diverse but are comfortable together:*
- *storey heights for new developments should be varied to reflect the historic building form of the particular part of the village where the site is located; and*
- *uniformity of design in smaller developments can be acceptable if it reflects a particular feature of the village, such as terraced houses*

The proposed external wall finishes include red, buff and painted brickwork some with contrasting and non-contrasting brick details such as flat and sprung arches, stone lintels, sub-cills to windows and stonework window and door surrounds. There are also examples of painted render some with Tudor framed panels, weatherboarding, tile hanging towards the village centre.

Roofs are pitched with either slates or brown mixture plain clay tiles, a few thatched properties still existing around the village. Fascia boards are mainly plain with plain or scalloped bargeboards painted white or black and many of the original dwellings have chimneys. Many of the roofs are simple front to back

pitched forms but there are a number of feature gables, some of which are cantilevered, overhanging at first floor level.

Entrance doors either have no covered porch at all or have simple door surrounds with either flat or small pitched roofs; some have larger covered pitched tiled roofs with decorative timber posts and struts.

Fenestration styles and sizes vary from casement to sliding sash windows with either Georgian bars or more simple vertical glazing bars, they are mainly painted white but there are some examples of stained or black frames with white casements or sashes.

The early design process was driven primarily by a few principles namely,

1. A low-density, two- storey residential scheme;
2. Houses set back behind the existing trees along Green Lane to ensure landscaping remains the dominant feature of the site;
3. Traditionally designed dwellings with materials including red and buff brickwork, painted render, tile hanging and plain tiled or slated roofs;
4. Varied designs which would complement each other and reflect the local diverse vernacular;
5. A single point of access in roughly the same location as the existing one, with a shared private driveway behind the existing trees to preserve the nature of Green Lane as much as possible;

6. Large private gardens with generous spacing between the dwellings;

and

7. A scheme which would enhance and complement the area whilst providing a mixture of dwelling types and sizes.

Many designs were explored including layouts of houses facing inwards around a cul-de-sac as well as schemes with individual driveways to each dwelling taken through the tree line along Green Lane.

It was decided however that a scheme which retained the existing tree line was a high priority. Designs were produced with buildings set back from the lane to ensure that the trees were the dominant element with new homes appearing subservient with glimpses of them through the trees.

A pre-application submission was made to North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) in December 2023 for two semi-detached and three detached dwellings with a private shared driveway behind the existing tree line along Green Lane.

A positive response was received from NHDC in February 2024. The planning officer suggested incorporating a larger element of smaller dwellings alongside the semi-detached and detached properties of the pre-application scheme in order to better serve local need.

The housing mix was subsequently revised by replacing a large five-bedroom property with a terrace of 1 x 3 bedroom (including a bedroom at ground floor level) and 2 x 2-bedroom houses. This provides a total of 7no. dwellings but with

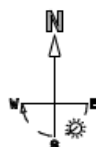
a preferable dwelling mix to better suit a range of local housing needs in line with the aims of the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan.

A meeting was also held in March 2024 between i-Transport, Osprey Homes and the Highways Engineers of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The scheme was positively received, minor requested amendments to the highways aspects of the scheme have been addressed.

Trees are a fundamental feature within the site and information has been submitted to support the planning application which shows the size, location and condition of the trees with advice on which trees are suitable for retention, some trees are recommended for removal due to their poor condition or their negative effect upon better ones and some trees are proposed for removal to benefit the layout or for access purposes.

The proposed scheme includes indicative new tree and hedge planting to enhance the proposals. More detailed landscaping proposals and a BNG assessment by HDA – Landscape Architecture, Masterplanning and Ecology consultants are also included with the application.

Following the responses to the NHDC and HCC pre-application submission and engagement, the scheme was modified to include a larger passing bay for vehicles including HCC refuse and fire engines just to the south of the site and at the new site entrance together with two pedestrian refuge areas to enable anyone walking along the lane to step out of the way of any traffic if needed.





The proposed Site Layout for 7 no. 2,3 & 4-bedroom dwellings



Sketch view of plots 1-4



Sketch view of the proposed new site entrance and plot 4



Sketch view of plots 5-7 and plot 4 beyond

The buildings have been designed with traditional architectural forms and materials to incorporate varied accommodation which reflects the local vernacular. The dwellings have generous spacing between them, ample parking, cycle storage provision and large gardens. The houses have been orientated to avoid excessive solar gain. Each will benefit from an air source heat pump and electric vehicle charging points and will comply with or exceed the Building Regulations part L requirements. All of the proposed dwellings will comply with the requirements of accessibility contained in the Building Regulations Part M4(2).

The design philosophy has been to retain as many good quality existing trees and hedges as possible to support biodiversity and provide a mature landscape setting for the new built environment. This will be enhanced by new indigenous trees, hedges and other planting.

The scheme has been developed over many months with input and discussion with the development team as well as the NHDC planning department and HCC Highways. The applicant looks for the support of NHDC and local residents for the proposed new development which they believe represents a well-conceived and executed design that would contribute to the local housing needs in a positive way.

A short concept video in the YouTube link below has been produced to help interested parties to appreciate the proposals more fully.

<https://youtu.be/UJshFgCteuk>