

Conversion of farm buildings at Kirby Manor Farm

STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING PRIOR APPROVAL SUBMISSION

KIRBY MANOR FARM



PREPARED BY

CRAWSHAW ARCHITECTS

JULY 2024

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1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Crawshaw Architects LLP to accompany a prior approval notification of a proposal to convert existing agricultural buildings situated north of the village of Ashwell to C3 use comprising 8 residential units of 1000 square meters in total gross internal area (GIA).

These works are to be carried out under the permitted development provisions of Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

This submission follows an earlier permission issued in 2022, and seeks to present revised proposals in line with the changes to the legislation introduced in 2024. The proposed conversions satisfy all of the criteria set out within the revised Section Q.1 of the Order. The conditions set out in Section Q.2, which relates to the prior approval process, are also satisfied.

Issues relating to size, appearance, access, parking, refuse storage and collections, garden amenity and access, daylight provision to interior spaces, and privacy have been carefully considered in the proposed designs and are described in what follows.

2. Location

The site of Kirby Manor farm lies at the north end of Ashwell Parish, is located outside of the settlement boundary, about 2 miles (3.2 km) to the north of Ashwell village (identified as Category A) and within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt (CGB1), as classified by the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

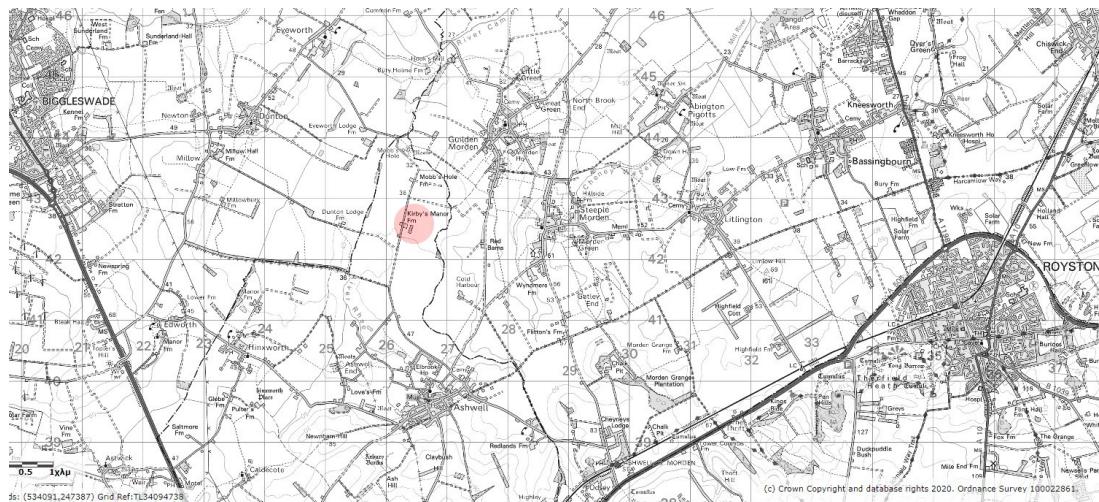


Figure 1. Showing location of the site north of Ashwell village

The Landscape classification of the subject site is designated as: National Character Areas (NCA) – 87 East Anglian Chalk. The parish of Ashwell, within which the site is situated, is designated as rural area under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985. There are no other statutory, historic or non-statutory designations attributed to the proposed development site.

The site and building are part of an agricultural holding known as Kirby Manor farm of approximately 80 Hectares. The agricultural holding is currently in use as a farm. The holding exceeds 5ha in extent and agricultural permitted development rights flow from this activity and holding size. The site was in agricultural use on the 20th March 2013 and remains in agricultural use.

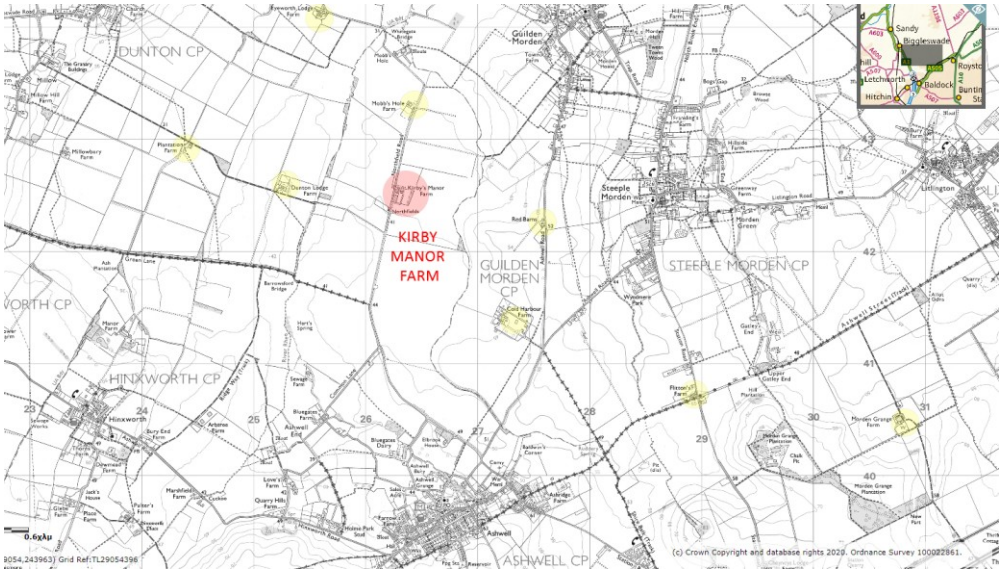


Figure 2. Showing location of the site north of Ashwell village



Figure 3. Location plan of Kirby Manor Farm

3. Site Context

The subject site, approximately 0.57 hectares in size, is adjacent to Northfield Road to the west and agricultural land to the north and east. To the south is Kirby Manor Farmhouse, a substantial two-story dwelling in separate ownership. To the west, on the other side of Northfield Road, is the smaller Kirby Manor Cottage, which is owned by the applicant.

There are two access points to the site. The southern access is via a metal gate situated between two buildings, while the northern access is open to the road, has more frequent use, and can accommodate larger agricultural vehicles.

The site contains four detached, single-storey buildings in total, varying in scale, form, and appearance and much of its open area is hardscaped with concrete. The group forms a small cluster within the otherwise open agricultural landscape.

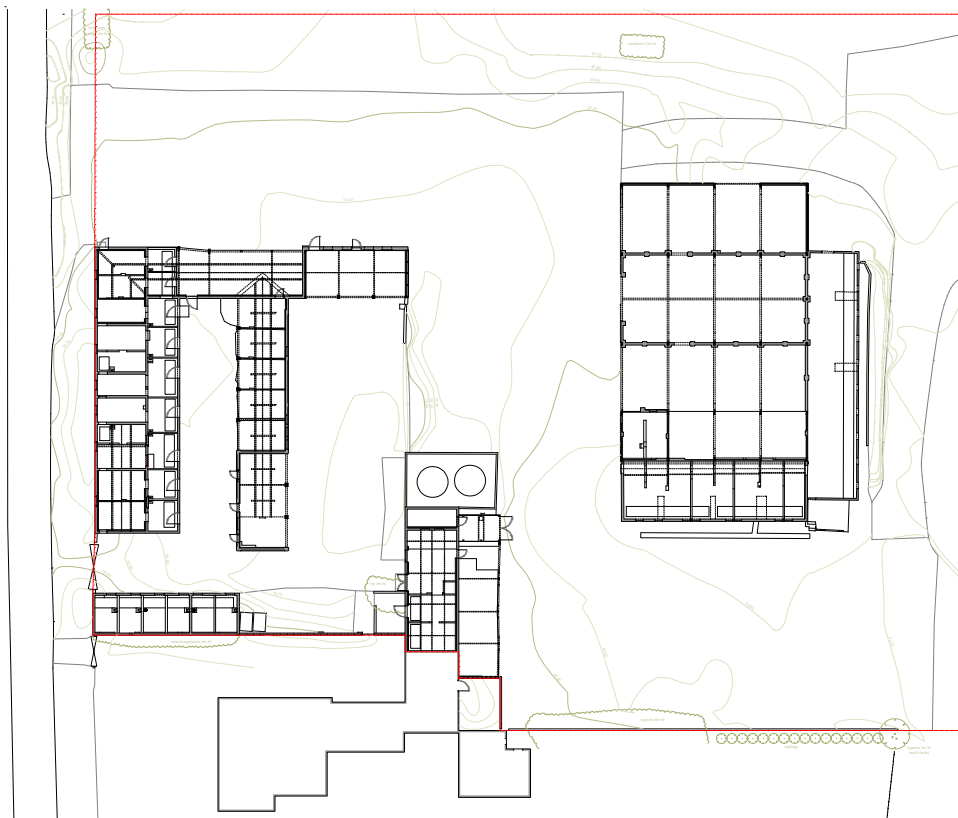


Figure 4. Site plan as existing

4. Existing Buildings

The first subject building, as annotated on the key plan below, is located along the west boundary of the agricultural holding and is adjacent to the public road.

The structure is composed of three single-storey wings. Two wings are oriented north-south, and the third wing to the north is oriented east-west. All three wings have double-pitched roofs, and there is a lean-to structure along the east elevation of the west wing. The majority of the north wing and the entirety of the east wing are open-fronted.

The walls of all three wings are constructed of facing yellow stock brick, while the lean-to structure on the west wing is made of concrete blocks. The pitched roof structure is composed of timber trusses, beams, and rafters in fair condition, with plastic corrugated roofing sheets. The roof of the lean-to structure is clad with fiber-cement corrugated roofing sheets.

The west wing measures 23.2m long and 5.2m wide, the east wing measures 24.9m long and 5.1m wide and lastly the north wing measures 30.9m long and 5m wide. The whole structure has a footprint of 515m² and the overall internal floor space is 436m².

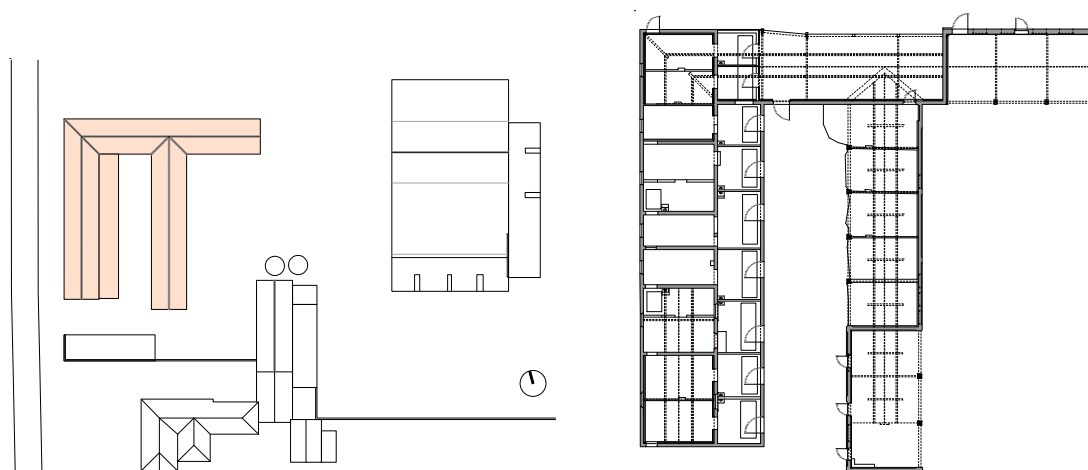


Figure 5. Left: Key Plan as existing Right: Floor plan as existing



Figure 6. West elevation of west wing



Figure 7. North elevation of north wing



Figure 8. East elevation of east wing



Figure 9. South and east elevations of west wing



Figure 10. West elevation of east wing and south elevation of north wing

The second subject building, as annotated on the key plan below, is located at the south-west corner boundary of the agricultural holding and is adjacent to the public road and Kirby Manor Farmhouse.

It is a single-storey former pigsty with a mono-pitch roof and is orientated east-west. The walls are constructed of facing yellow stock brick and the roof is clad with fiber-cement corrugated roofing sheets.

The building measures 14.5m long and 4.1m wide. The whole structure has a footprint of 60.3m² and the overall internal floor space is 52.3m².

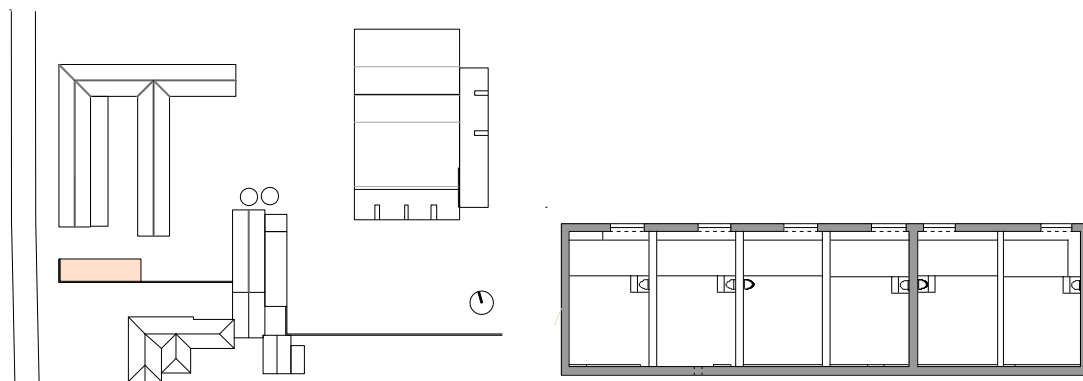


Figure 11. Left: Key Plan as existing Right: Floor plan as existing



Figure 12. West elevation (Northfield Road)

The third subject building, as annotated on the key plan below, is located at the south boundary of the agricultural holding and is adjacent to Kirby Manor Farmhouse. The building is divided between the subject agricultural holding and Kirby Manor Farmhouse. It serves as a garage for Kirby Manor Farmhouse at the south gable end.

The building is a single-volume rectangular structure with a double-pitched roof, oriented north-south. There is a small two-storey extension at the north end of the east elevation, as well as an adjoined timber pergola covering the entire east elevation. Additionally, there are two silos at the north gable end.

The walls are constructed of facing yellow stock brick and, in some places, concrete blocks, while the roof covering is a combination of slate tiles and fiber-cement corrugated roofing sheets at the north gable end. The two-storey extension is constructed of a steel frame and is clad in timber boards, with the roof covered in fiber-cement corrugated roofing sheets. The roof of the lean-to pergola is covered with plastic corrugated roofing sheets.

The building measures 14.2m long and 5.3m wide, while the 2-storey extension measures 4m long and 2.6m wide. The entire structure has a footprint of 86.9m², excluding the pergola, and the overall internal floor space is 77.9m².

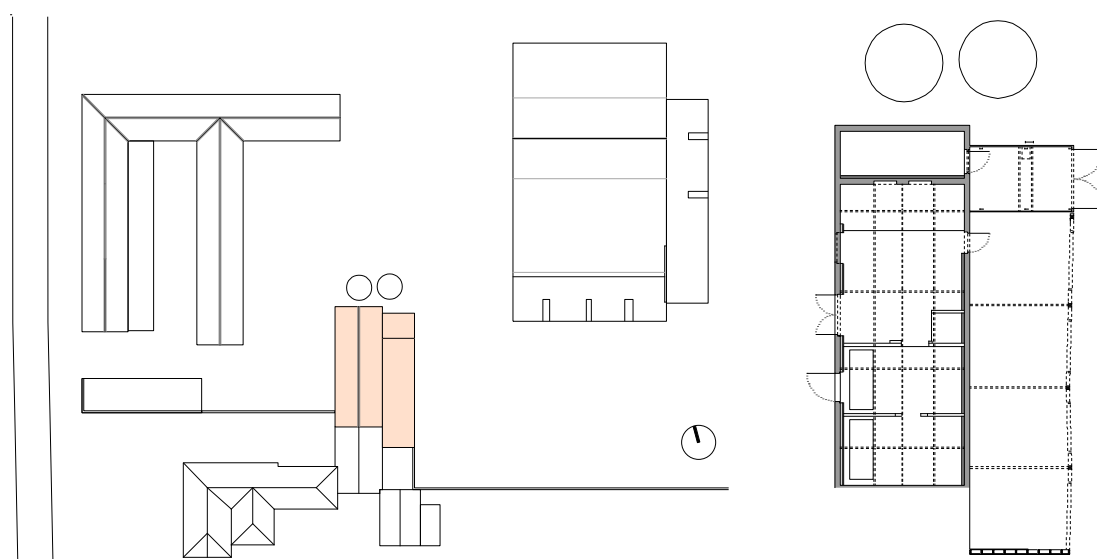


Figure 13. Left: Key Plan as existing Right: Floor plan as existing



Figure 14. East elevation



Figure 15.



Figure 16. North elevation

The fourth subject building, as annotated on the key plan below, is located at the east boundary of the agricultural holding and is set back from the Northfield Road behind the agricultural sheds, at a distance of 55m.

It is a concrete framed structure with concrete block infills and fiber-cement cladding, and a similarly clad roof. The building has 2 lean-to structures, on the south and east sides and is partly open on the west and north elevations.

The building measures 33.4m wide and 23.5m long. The whole structure has a footprint of 744m² and the overall internal floor space is 735m².

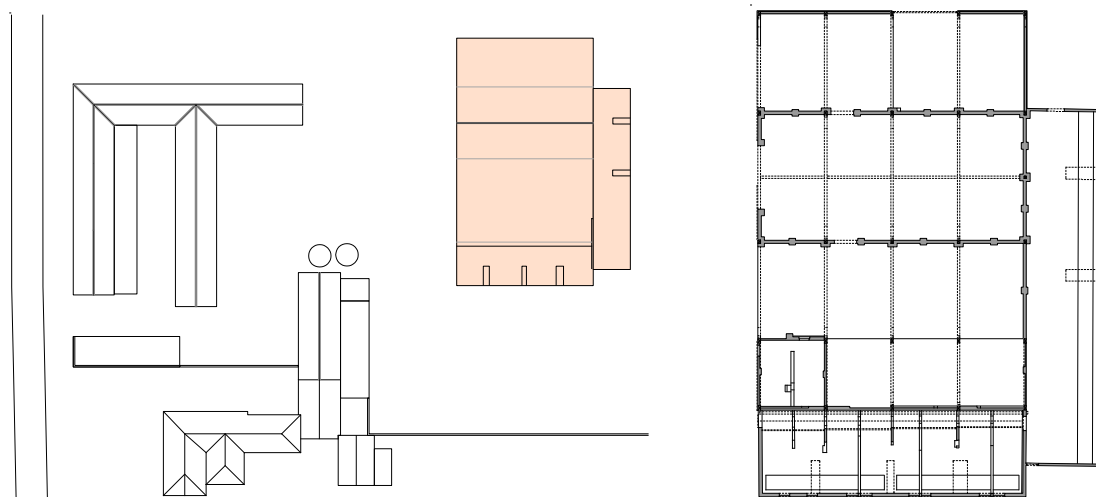


Figure 17. Left: Key Plan as existing Right: Floor plan as existing



Figure 18. West elevation



Figure 19. North elevation



Figure 20. East elevation



Figure 21. South elevation

5. Proposed Design

The proposal involves converting the existing agricultural holding into eight separate dwelling houses, each with generous front and rear gardens. The design is guided by the existing form and internal structures, and adheres to the nationally described space standards, addressing concerns regarding privacy, overlooking, and natural daylight.

Access to the development will be provided via a new access drive situated in the same location as the current access point, leading to the core of the cluster where parking spaces and turning areas will be located. Access to Unit 1 will be provided via a gated private drive in the same location as the current gated access point.



Figure 22. Proposed site plan

5.1. Layout

The first subject building has been divided into three 3-bedroom residential units, each situated in one wing. The lean-to structure along the east elevation of the west wing is proposed to be demolished, as the eaves are too low for habitable space.

- Unit 1 has a gross internal area of 123.61m² and features a private gated drive directly from the public road. The common areas face east to an enclosed garden, while the private areas face west to the public road and a garden at the north end.
- Unit 2 has a gross internal area of 105.15m² and is accessed via the core of the cluster. The common areas face east to an enclosed garden, while the private areas face west to a separate enclosed garden.
- Unit 3 has a gross internal area of 100.54m² and is also accessed via the core of the cluster. The common areas face south to an enclosed garden, while the private areas face north to a separate garden.

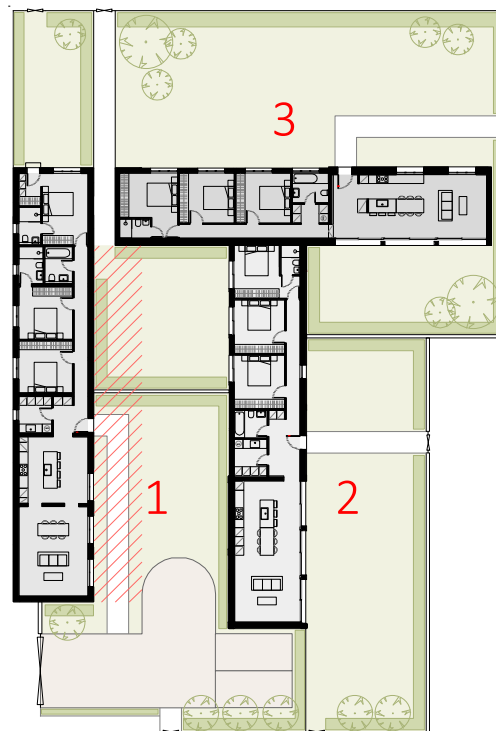


Figure 23. Proposed floor plan of Units 1, 2 and 3

The second subject building is proposed to be partially demolished, as the eaves are too low for habitable space.

The remaining structure will serve as a waste collection store for Units 1, 2, and 4, accessed from Northfield Road via a gate. The walls that will remain are those along the boundary with Kirby Manor Farmhouse and the public road.

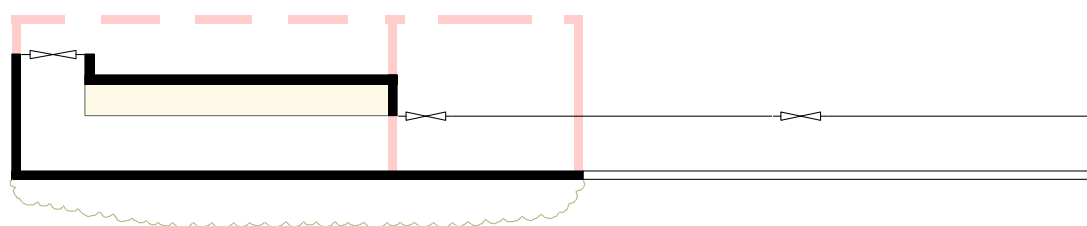


Figure 24. Waste collection for Units 1,2 and 4

The third subject building is proposed to be converted into a 2-bedroom residential unit with a gross internal area of 101.98m². The adjoined timber pergola along the east elevation is proposed to be removed, as well as the two silos at the north gable end.

A single-storey extension is proposed along the east elevation (rear), extending 3.9 meters beyond the existing building's wall. The extension will have a lean-to roof with eaves lower than those of the existing building and will house the two bedrooms of the converted unit.

Unit 4 is accessed via the core of the cluster through its north gable end. The common and private areas face east to a private garden. The west elevation has only one glazed door providing access to the west garden. It is proposed that this door have obscure glass to prevent overlooking issues between Unit 4, Unit 2 to the west, and Kirby Manor Farmhouse to the south.

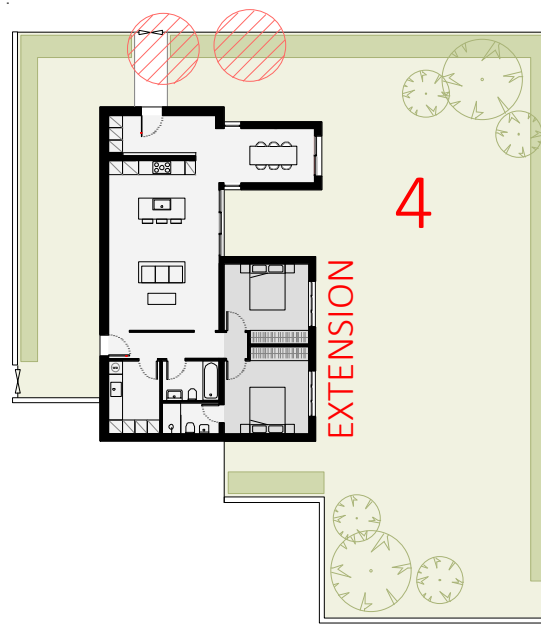


Figure 25. Proposed floor plan of Unit 4

The fourth subject building has been divided into four residential units, guided by the internal structure. Each unit is accessible via the core of the cluster to the west of the building and served by gardens on the north, south, east and west sides.

- Unit 5 has a gross internal area of 118.72m² and comprises three bedrooms. The common areas face west and north towards a private garden, while the private areas also face north towards the same private garden.
- Unit 6 has a gross internal area of 150.00m² and includes two bedrooms. The common areas face west towards a private front garden, while the private areas face east towards a private rear garden. The west wall is recessed from the existing building footprint by approximately 3.4 meters to provide a larger front garden and enhanced privacy.
- Unit 7 has a gross internal area of 150.00m² and comprises three bedrooms. The common areas face west towards a private front garden, similar to Unit 6, while the private areas face east towards a private rear garden. The west wall is recessed from the existing building footprint, also similar to Unit 6.

- Unit 8 has a gross internal area of 150.00m² and includes four bedrooms. The common areas face west towards a private front garden, while the private areas face south towards the same private garden. Part of the west wall is recessed from the existing building footprint by approximately 3.4 meters, similar to Units 6 and 7.

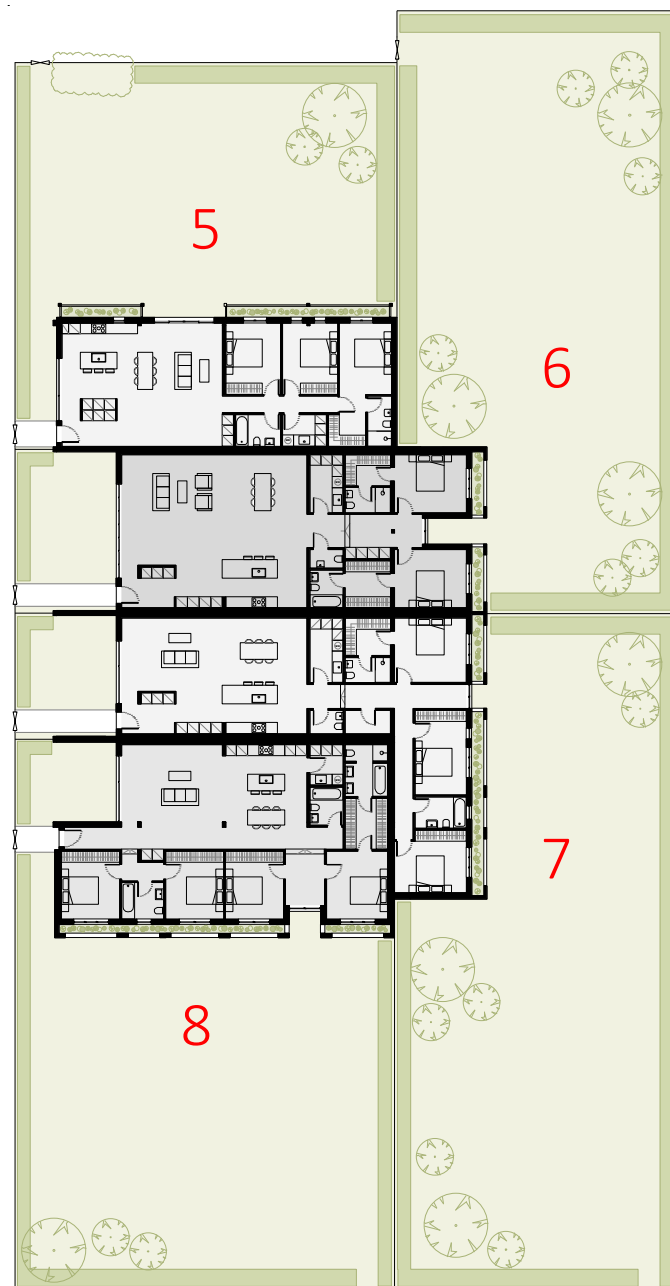


Figure 26. Proposed floor plan of Unit 5, 6, 7 and 8

5.2. Appearance & Materials

The existing buildings have the raw and undomesticated appearance typical of working farm buildings. While the structures are in a serviceable condition, the external cladding materials and roof coverings require replacement.

For the first building (Units 1, 2, and 3), we propose to replace the existing roofing material with slate tiles, incorporating high-standard insulation and roof lights to serve the rooms below. The existing external brick and block walls will be rendered in a red brick colour, while the new walls in the open-fronted volumes will be clad with vertical timber battens stained black.

All windows and doors of the first subject building will be aluminium, double-glazed, and powder-coated in matt dark grey colour.

The brick enclosure of the waste collection store for Units 1, 2, and 4, located in the altered second subject building, will also have rendered walls in a red brick colour to match the material choice for the first building.

For the third subject building (Unit 4), we propose to retain and repair the existing slate tile roofing where necessary, and replace the corrugated fiber-cement roofing at the north gable end with matching slate tiles. The existing external brick and block walls of the main volume will also be rendered in a red brick colour.

The existing double-storey height volume at the rear of the north gable end is proposed to have a combination of horizontal and vertical timber cladding stained black on the walls and dark grey standing seam zinc roofing sheets.

The walls of the proposed lean-to extension will also have vertical timber batten cladding stained black, and the roof will incorporate dark grey standing seam zinc roofing sheets to match the material palette of the double-storey height volume.

All windows and doors of the third subject building will be aluminium, double-glazed, and powder-coated in matt dark grey, matching those of the first subject building.



Figure 27. Bird's eye view of the proposal from south-east



Figure 28. Visualization of the proposal from the access drive at the core of the cluster

For the fourth subject building (Units 5, 6, 7, and 8), we propose to replace the existing roofing material with standing seam zinc roofing sheets in a natural finish (light grey), incorporating high-standard insulation and roof lights to serve the rooms below (Units 7 and 8). Along the west elevation, it is proposed to have recessed wall areas of approximately 3 meters with a perforated sloping roof. This roof will consist of new aluminium rafters (100mm) installed on top of the existing horizontal concrete rafters, with tension wires in between to support climbers.

The external walls will be clad with a combination of horizontal and vertical timber battens and slats in a natural finish. Slim planters will be integrated into the walls along the east and south elevations. On the north elevation, aluminium planters will be attached along the external wall. Above the planters, a timber frame will be installed with tension wires to facilitate climbing plants.

All windows and doors of the fourth subject building will be aluminium, double-glazed, and powder-coated in matt light grey colour to match the zinc roofing.



Figure 29. Visualization of the proposal from north-west

5.3. Landscaping

The core of the cluster has been designated for access and parking arrangements. Each residential unit features generous front and rear gardens enclosed with wooden clapboard fencing and indigenous species hedgerows. For enhanced privacy between Units 2 and 3, and Units 2 and 4, a 2m high garden wall rendered in red brick colour has been proposed. At the request of the neighbour, along the boundary with Kirby Manor Farmhouse, a 2m high brick garden wall is also proposed.

The rear garden of Unit 2 is accessible through a gap in the building located between Units 1 and 3. The side garden of Unit 5 and the rear garden of Unit 6 are separately accessible via a proposed track along the north boundary. The rear gardens of Units 4, 7, and 8 are separately accessible via a proposed track along the south boundary, which branches off from an existing agricultural track to the southeast. This southern track is intended for garden maintenance use and not for everyday access.



Figure 30. Bird's eye view of the proposal from south-east

6. Class Q criteria and prior approval process

Amendment of Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Order permits the following:

Q. Development consisting of-

(a) a change of use of a building that is part of an established agricultural unit and any land within that building's curtilage, or a former agricultural building that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit and any land within that building's curtilage to a use falling within Class C3 (dwelling houses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order.

(b) development referred to in sub-paragraph (a) together with the extension of the building referred to in sub-paragraph (a), or

(c) development referred to in sub-paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in sub-paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwelling houses) of that Schedule or to extend that building.

Development is permitted subject to a number of restrictions and parameters set out in Section Q.1 which are listed below. The proposed conversion of the buildings to dwellings satisfies these stipulations as set out below.

Section Q.1

Clause (a) and (b) Agricultural use on 24th July 2023

The site was in agricultural use on the 24th July 2023 and therefore complies with the requirements of this clause.

Clause (c) Size of dwelling houses

The floor space of any dwelling house developed under Class Q does not exceed 150.00m². The proposed residential units have Gross Internal Areas as follows:

	GIA		GIA
Unit 1	123.61m ²	Unit 5	118.72m ²
Unit 2	105.15 m ²	Unit 6	150.00m ²
Unit 3	100.54m ²	Unit 7	150.00m ²
Unit 4	101.98m ²	Unit 8	150.00m ²
TOTAL	1000m ²		

Clause (d) Number and cumulative floor space of dwelling houses

The proposed cumulative number of separate dwelling houses within the established agricultural unit is 8 and the proposed cumulative floor space of dwelling houses is 1000m², complying with the requirements of this clause that the cumulative number of separate dwelling houses should not exceed 10 or have a cumulative floor area of more than 1000m².

Clause (e) and (f) Agricultural tenancy

The site is owned freehold by the applicant and is farmed by him and is in vacant possession and forms part of his wider agricultural property. It has not been tenanted since it came into his possession in 2003. Prior to that date it was in the possession of the applicant's father who acquired the land c.1970 and did not tenant it. It therefore complies with the requirements of these clauses that the site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy.

Clause (g) Development under Class A and B

No development under Class A or Class B of Part_6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 has been carried out on the established agricultural unit since 20th March 2013. It therefore complies with the requirements of this clause.

Clause (h) and (i) Extension of existing building

The submitted plans illustrate that the external dimensions of the building will not be extended at any given point, other than the proposed extension at the rear of Unit 4,

which complies with all requirements of paragraph Q.1 (i). The proposed extension is single-storey, located at the rear of the existing building, extends 3.9 meters beyond the rear wall of the existing building, maintains eaves height not exceeding that of the existing building, and is sited on land already covered by a hard surface since before July 24th, 2023, for a period of at least 10 years prior to the commencement of development under Class Q.

Clause (j) Building operations

The structural elements of the existing buildings are to be fully retained. The proposals do not include building operations other than the installation or replacement of windows, doors, and external walls and the provision of water, drainage, electricity or other services. Nor do they include demolition other than to the extent necessary to carry out those operations. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Clause (k) Article 2(3) land

The site is not in a conservation area or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or in the green belt or any other article 2(3) land designations. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Clause (l) SSSI, SHA or MEA

The site is not, nor is it part of a site of special scientific interest, a safety hazard area or a military explosives area. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Clause (m) Scheduled Monuments

The site does not contain a listed building or a Scheduled Monument. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Clause (n) Listed buildings

The site does not contain a listed building. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Clause (o) Nationally described space standard

The submitted plans illustrate that the existing buildings are capable of complying with the nationally described space standard. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Clause (p) Access to public highway

The site has a suitable existing access to a public highway. The proposals are therefore in conformity with this clause.

Section Q.2

Section Q.2 of Class Q sets out details of the prior approval process. It outlines that the prior approval submission should determine whether the Council's prior approval is required in respect of the following conditions:

- (a) Transport and highways impacts of the development,
- (b) Noise impacts of the development,
- (c) Contamination risks on the site,
- (d) Flooding risks on the site,
- (e) Whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3(dwelling houses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order,
- (f) The design or external appearance of the building, and
- (g) The provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms.

We consider each of these issues below:

Clause (a) Transport and highways impacts

The proposed development raises no transport or highways issues. The proposals include a design for vehicular access from the public high-way including statutory

visibility splays, turning circles and on-site parking for residents, visitors and waste collection.

Clause (b) Noise impacts of the development

There are no nearby noise sources that would impact upon the residential amenities of the future occupiers of the proposed dwellings. The proposed buildings are adjacent to existing residential properties.

Clause (c) Contamination risks on the site

The site is not known to contain any materials that represent a contamination risk.

Clause (d) Flooding risks on the site

The proposed development site is within Flood Zone 1, the lowest designation that refers to land assessed as having less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding and is therefore not thought to be at significant risk of flooding.

It is intended that surface water from roofs should be directed into storage tanks for irrigation of the gardens in the summer months or into soak-aways to mimic the natural discharge of water into the ground- thereby reducing the risk of flash flooding. Additionally, the use of permeable materials on the surfaces of the new access drive and parking spaces, as well as the hardscape around the buildings (gravel & pavers with grassed or sand spaces) will contribute towards the avoidance of water runoff.

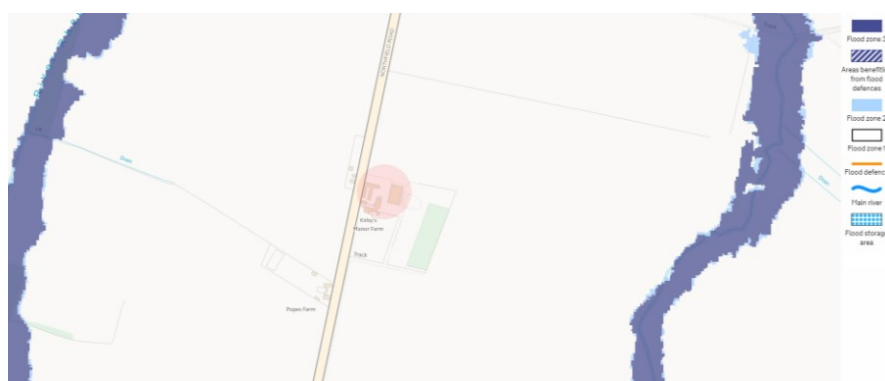


Figure 31. Flood map (source: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>)

Clause (e) practicability and desirability of location

There are no other factors to our knowledge that would preclude or militate against the use of the building for residential purposes. The proposed buildings offer the potential for high quality accommodation, with a high standard of privacy and amenity for future occupiers. The site is located approximately 2 miles to the north of the village of Ashwell and adjacent to 2 existing dwellings on Northfield Road.

Clause (f) Design and external appearance

The documents submitted with this notification illustrate how the appearance of the proposed buildings will be enhanced.

We propose using a combination of external timber cladding with natural and black stained finishes, complemented by red brick-colored render for the walls. This approach aims to preserve the barn-like quality of the structures while introducing material finishes that are sympathetic to the new domestic use and its future occupants.

The existing cementitious or plastic roofing materials will be replaced with a combination of a new zinc roof in a natural matte finish and slate tiles. New windows and doors have generally been specified as high-spec double-glazed aluminium, either in light grey to match the new zinc roofing or dark grey to complement the proposed slate tiled roofs.

These proposals may be considered to be logical and appropriate and an enhancement of the appearance of the existing buildings, which are now in a state of some disrepair.

Clause (g) Provision of natural light in all habitable rooms.

The design drawings submitted with this notification illustrate that natural light is to be provided to all of the habitable rooms within each of the units. This is to be achieved by means of both new roof-lights and new windows.

7. Access & Parking

7.1. Access

A 5 meter wide access drive constructed out of a permeable paving material is proposed. The paving allows both for percolation of rain water and the use of the drive by pedestrians. The drive widens to 6m at the junction with the public highway where a short stretch of tarmacked road is proposed to connect to the public highway. Visibility splays of 2.4 x 36 m are easily accommodated at the junction.

7.2. Parking

2 parking spaces and 2 bicycle parking spaces have been provided for each residential unit as well as 4 additional visitor/delivery parking spaces. This is in line with the residential parking standards published in North Hertfordshire District Council's (2011), *Vehicle Parking at New Development, Supplementary Planning Document*.

Class Use C3	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard
2+ Bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling (Minimum)	1 secure covered space per dwelling (minimum). None if garage or secure area provided within curtilage of dwelling.
Visitor/ unallocated	Between 0.25 & 0.75 spaces per dwelling (rounded up to nearest whole number), with the lower standard being applied where there are no garages in the proposed scheme and the higher standard applied where every dwelling in the scheme is to be provided with a garage.	If no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling then 1 covered and secure space per dwelling in a communal area for residents plus 1 space per dwelling for visitors

8. Sustainability

Approach

Mindful of the need to reduce long term energy demands the proposed development will give consideration to renewable technologies during the course of its implementation.

Renewable sources of energy

There is ample opportunity for solar panels to be installed on the south facing pitched roofs. Ground-source heat pumps or air-source heat exchange systems could also be considered as suitable forms of renewable energy for these proposals.

Thermal performance

Following a favorable planning outcome, data on projected energy use and the possible contribution from renewable energy sources should be assessed using the Government SAP tool and IES soGware with the aim of achieving an improvement over the Part L Building Regulations. Fabric U-values for walls, roofs and floors should be reduced to minimize energy losses using insulation composed of natural or renewable materials. The proposed dwelling should incorporate A+ rated appliances as well as high efficiency light fittings (LED lamps).

Ventilation

The residential units will require no mechanical ventilation except low watt systems fitted with heat recovery units in the bathrooms and over the kitchen hob. Background trickle vents should be installed where appropriate.

Water conservation

All baths and showers should be mains fed subject to local mains water pressure tests. Showers should have a maximum flow of 7.5 litres per minute, basin taps should

restricted to 4.0 litres per minute at 0.3MPa. Baths should have a maximum capacity of 100 litres. WC cisterns should hold no more than 6 litres.

Home working

A high-speed broadband connection should be provided to facilitate working from home.

Waste management

Space has been provided for general, recycling and garden waste. A composting bin should also be placed in a suitable location in each garden.

Electric Vehicle Charging point

An Electric vehicle charging point have been provided for each unit.

9. Conclusion

These proposals not only satisfy all of the criteria set out in the permitted development provisions of Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, but also represent high quality housing provision at a time when national housing supply targets have not been met.

The proposals may be regarded as a significant enhancement of the existing buildings and of the immediate surroundings and of benefit to the existing houses in the setting.

For all the reasons set out in this statement we ask that these proposals be consented under the provisions set out in the latest version of the Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

Crawshaw Architects LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Crawshaw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aidan Crawshaw M.A. (Cantab) A.A. Arch. dip.

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