



Design & Access Statement

Motte & Bailey, Hitchin SG5 3QD

Erection of one 4-bedroom detached dwelling including bin store, parking, landscaping and reconfiguration of the existing public house car park and rear garden. Creation of vehicular access off Crab Tree Lane on land to the rear of The Motte & Bailey Public House. 1 Great Green, Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3QD.



Fig. 1: The Motte & Bailey (Google Maps)

1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application regarding the above proposals.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings/supporting information:

- PLC drawings: 25.4585.050_P1, 25.4585.051_P1, 25.4585.052_P1, 25.4585.100_P3, 25.4585.101_P4, 25.4585.102_P2 and 25.4585.103_P4.
- Planning Statement – prepared by CPC Planning Consultants
- Transport Statement – prepared by Transport Planning Associates (TPA)
- Heritage Statement of Significance – prepared by HCUK Group

2.0 Planning Policy Context

The proposals have been designed in accordance with the current development plans for North Hertfordshire District Council, comprising:

- North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011-2031
- The Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031

North Hertfordshire's Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted on 8 November 2022 to set out policies to shape and guide development in The North Hertfordshire District to 2031, with the relevant policies as follows:

- Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
- Policy SP13: Historic environment
- Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters
- Policy T2: Parking
- Policy D1: Sustainable design
- Policy D3: Protecting living conditions
- Policy NE11: Contaminated land
- Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets
- Policy HE4: Archaeology

The following policies from the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031 bear relevance to the proposal:

- PNP1-Metting Local and Wider Needs
- PNP2: Design and Character
- PNP8: Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage
- PNP11: Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Motorists
- PNP13: Car Parking

3.0 Site Analysis

The application site is located within the village of Pirton, which had a recorded population of approximately 1,300 residents and 526 dwellings according to the 2011 Census. The site comprises a section of the beer garden associated with the Motte & Bailey public house and is therefore considered previously developed (brownfield) land. The Motte & Bailey, dating from the early twentieth century, is identified as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and represents a prominent local landmark within the village, occupying a visually significant position at the junction of Great Green and Crab Tree Lane.

The whole site is within the Pirton Conservation Area, specifically Character Area One: The Mediaeval Settlement.

The eastern site boundary immediately adjoins the Toot Hill motte and bailey castle and shrunken mediaeval village Scheduled Ancient Monument.

According to the Environment Agency Flood Maps, the site is located within Flood Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding, therefore this planning application does not require a Flood Risk Assessment.

4.0 Use / Amount

This application proposes the erection of one four bedroom detached dwelling at 110m² with associated car parking, private gardens and bin/cycle storage. The reconfiguration of the public house, car park and garden are also part of this application.

5.0 Design & Appearance

The site was previously identified in a 2018 pre-application submission as being located within a highly sensitive area, due to its proximity to the boundary of the Toot Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). However, it is noted that the SAM currently adjoins at least eleven existing residential properties along its boundary. The proposed development has been designed to maintain the character outlined within the Conservation Area Appraisal, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to safeguard the setting of the SAM and prevent any undue impact on its significance.

The proposed development incorporates a comprehensive landscaping scheme, including the introduction of hedgerows and additional tree planting, to assist in maintaining the established setting of the Toot Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). The existing mature vegetation and tree line already provide an effective visual buffer, mitigating views both into and out of the SAM. These features are to be retained and enhanced as part of the proposal. When combined with the sensitive and contextually appropriate design of the new dwelling, the overall scheme will ensure that any impact on the significance and setting of the Toot Hill SAM is limited and remains within acceptable parameters.

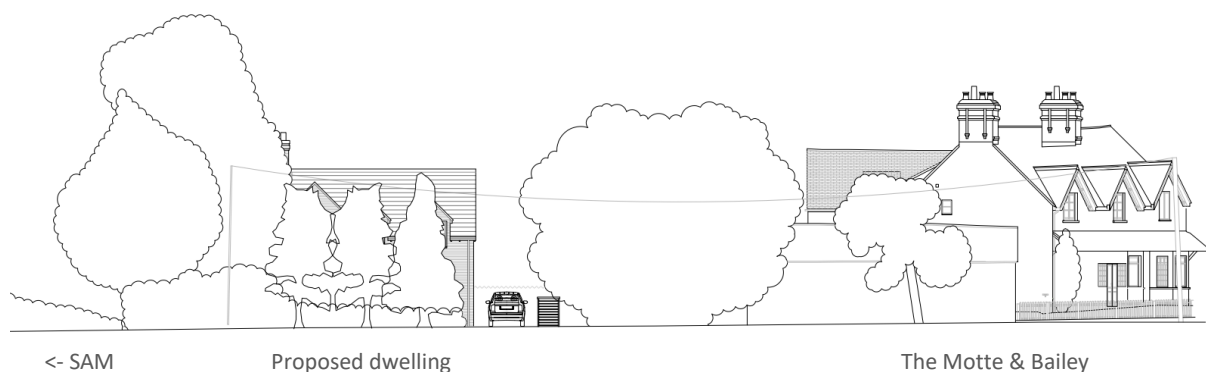


Fig. 1: Proposed street scene at Crab Tree Lane. NTS

The existing built context along Crab Tree Lane includes a considerable presence of post-war housing on the northern side and a 1980s vicarage on the south side. Given this established pattern of development, the introduction of a single, sensitively designed dwelling cannot be considered to result in a harmful alteration to, or compromise of, the setting of the Toot Hill Schedule Ancient Monument (SAM).

The Conservation Area guidance highlights the village's architectural diversity, encompassing a wide range of building forms, period and materials. Distinctive characteristics include the use of timber framing in earlier structures, red clay tiles or slate for roofing, and the use of brick in 19th and 20th century developments. Roof profiles and fenestration patterns similarly display significant variation across the settlement. In the immediate vicinity of the site, several later developments are observed to exhibit limited adherence to the established design principles or material palette that define the historic character of the area.

The planning drawings demonstrate that the proposed dwelling would be appropriately set back from the highway and effectively screened by existing and proposed vegetation, ensuring it appears as discreet and sympathetic addition within al already partially developed street scene.

The design approach has been carefully considered to complement the established character of the Conservation Area, drawing architectural inspiration from traditional forms and materials prevalent within the wider locality, rather than reflecting the post-war suburban typologies present in the immediate context.

This approach aligns with Policy PNP 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, which requires a new development to "recognise, respect and reinforce the district local, rural character" of the village.

Particular consideration has been given to the height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design detailing and choice of materials, in accordance with the policy's stated priorities.

Features that have been included that serve to make the building particularly in keeping with its surroundings include:

- Inclusion of a chimney
- Use of red brick as primary material
- Brown clay plain roof tiles
- Dormer style windows placed low on the roof and used as opposed to roof lights
- Sympathetic window design, in proportion to the ratio of the solid wall
- Porch above the front door, in proportion to the house
- Building height lower than the neighbouring pub and trees

The proposed development would be located within a generously sized private garden plot, reflecting the established pattern and scale of surrounding residential properties. The inclusion of a well-balanced hard and soft landscaping scheme would enhance the site's overall visual amenity, support local biodiversity, and contribute positively towards achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) objectives.

The proposed dwelling and its associated garden would be both physical and visually separated from the adjoining public house and car park through the installation of a 1.8-metre-high acoustic fence complemented by additional soft landscaping. Given the degree of separation and the effectiveness of the proposed screening, it is considered that future occupants of the dwelling would not be subject to significant noise or disturbance arising from the nearby public house, particularly in comparison to existing residential properties located at similar distances.

Bin/cycle storage is proposed to attend the proposed dwelling and located within the private garden.

6.0 Transport & Access

A Transport Statement has been prepared by Transport Planning Associates in support of this application.

The findings of the Transport Statement confirm that the application site is well served by local amenities, many of which are located within a convenient walking or cycling distance. This accessibility facilitates healthy and sustainable travel choices for future occupants.

Public transport provision in the vicinity of the site includes several bus stops, namely Motte & Bailey PH, War Memorial, and Post Office bus stops. These stops are served by the Centrebus (South) Route 89, which provides a total of seven services per day in each direction between Hitchin and Henlow Camp.

In addition to local bus services, the site benefits from proximity to two railway stations, Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City, both located within an approximately 8-kilometre cycling distance, offering further opportunities for sustainable travel.

Vehicular access to the proposed dwelling will be obtained from Crab Tree Lane, approximately 40 metres east of its junction with Great Green. The development will provide parking accommodation for two cars and two bicycles, in accordance with the relevant standards set out within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031). The parking spaces will be positioned directly off Crab Tree Lane, to the front of the dwelling.

Overall, the site occupies an accessible and sustainable location, with a range of services and facilities within easy reach and public transport connections that support non-car modes of travel. The proposal is therefore consistent with local and national policy objectives promoting sustainable development and reduced reliance on private car use.

The proposed development would not cause a significant impact. As a result, there are no transport or highway reasons why the proposed development should not be granted planning consent.

7.0 Sustainability

The scheme seeks to mitigate negative environmental impacts through sustainable design and construction methods, resource efficiencies and provision for waste recycling.

The following measures are to be incorporated within the scheme:

1) Water efficiency:

- Low flush toilets, flow regulated spray taps
- Rainwater harvesting systems

2 i) Sustainable Construction measures proposed, include:

- Locally sourced materials where possible
- Use of recyclable and natural materials where possible
- Use of non-toxic materials and paints
- Use of low maintenance materials

2 ii) Energy efficiency measures include:

- High insulation values
- Draught proofed windows and doors/for maximum air tightness
- Double glazed windows with low –E glass

3) Layout and Design:

- The design proposals are of low environmental impact
- All proposed construction materials are to be resilient
- All windows are to be openable to allow natural ventilation
- Low maintenance materials are proposed

8.0 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The development design must demonstrate it can satisfy the national requirement of at least 10% biodiversity net gain. The 0.1656 ha site comprises the active Motte & Bailey pub with its pub house building, beer garden/children's play area, and parking area.

The most important habitat on site is a single mature lime tree of medium size, with the vegetated garden area also contributing some value to the baseline ecological condition.

The development will reduce the greenspace from 514m² to 254m². The lime tree is projected for removal, which will incur a 0.1498-unit loss requiring replacement.

Three small trees and 10m of new native hedgerow are to be planted as compensation, but this will not be enough to address the shortfall. To comply with the statutory +10% requirement, the development must purchase 0.1575 units off-site.

9.0 Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development is entirely compatible and appropriate in the area and will provide an efficient use of land. The design and finish will be appropriate to the locality, responding sensitively to the surrounding buildings and the Toot Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), reinforcing and enhancing the character and quality of the area.