

PLANNING STATEMENT
FOR
SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS

to
BECKET'S
20 HODWELL
ASHWELL
HERTS
SG7 5QQ



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a Householder Planning Application for Beckett's, 20 Hodwell, Ashwell. The application seeks planning permission for the proposed development as described within the accompanying drawings and supporting documents.

The purpose of this statement is to assess the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and to demonstrate that the development represents an appropriate and sympathetic addition to the property. It considers the site's context, the design approach, and the potential impact of the proposals on the surrounding area.

2.0 CONTEXT

The application site occupies a corner plot within the village of Ashwell and lies within the defined settlement boundary and the Ashwell Conservation Area. The site is triangular in shape, tapering towards the rear boundary, and is predominantly hard-landscaped. The site comprises a detached bungalow with an attached annexe, together with a detached single garage. While the property is not a listed building, there is a Grade II listed village lock-up situated within the western part of the site boundary.

The proposed development seeks to enhance the functionality, appearance, and environmental performance of the dwelling, while responding sensitively to its village context and heritage setting.



Location Plan

The existing dwelling is a detached bungalow with a pitched roof and walls of mixed construction, including brickwork and an original lightweight timber frame. The property has an Energy Performance Certificate of F and requires upgrading to improve functionality and energy efficiency.

The accommodation currently comprises an entrance porch and hall, living/dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, two bedrooms and a family shower room. An attached annexe, accessed via a separate entrance, provides a sitting room, galley kitchen, utility room, bathroom and a third bedroom. The current arrangement results in fragmented internal spaces and an inefficient use of the existing footprint.

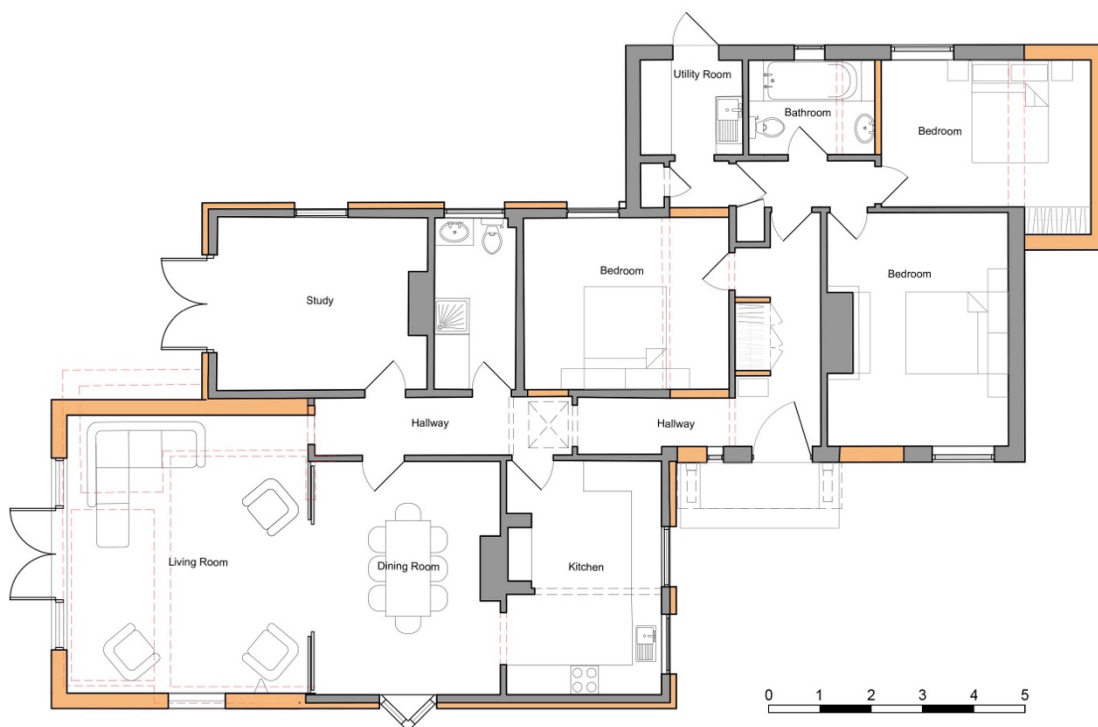


3.0 PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises a series of modest internal alterations to the existing bungalow, as illustrated on the proposed plans and elevations. The works focus on rationalising the internal layout, improving the relationship between spaces, and creating a single, cohesive dwelling that better meets modern living requirements.

The scheme includes the demolition of the existing west-facing single-storey flat roof extension, which does not complement the character of the original dwelling and provides limited usable space. This extension is to be replaced with a new single-storey addition designed to enhance the connection between the main living areas and the garden, while also improving the building's overall environmental performance.

The proposal also includes the enlargement of the bedroom to the east of the property. The bungalow form is retained, with the overall footprint remaining broadly comparable to the existing arrangement and no disproportionate increase in scale or massing. The proposed roof plan reflects the established roof geometry, maintaining a low-profile appearance consistent with the existing dwelling and surrounding built form.



Proposed Floor Plan

Externally, the proposed elevations demonstrate that the development remains subservient to the original building, preserving its characteristic single-storey scale and pitched roof form. Minor adjustments to window and door openings are carefully considered to improve daylight, outlook, and internal functionality, while maintaining a balanced and domestic appearance appropriate to the village context and Conservation Area setting.



South Elevation

The existing timber-formed entrance on the south elevation will be removed and replaced with a more proportionate entrance that reflects and enhances the character of the dwelling.

Photovoltaic panels are proposed on the roof slopes and are discreetly integrated within the roof plane to further improve the energy efficiency of the property.



West Elevation

The proposal also seeks consent for essential maintenance and improvement works to the existing external render. The existing render is in poor condition, with widespread cracking and areas of failure, posing a risk of water ingress. Structural advice has confirmed that the render should be removed and replaced with a modern breathable and water-resistant system. As the timber-frame external walls currently have no insulation, it is proposed to install high-density external insulation panels, followed by a new insulating and breathable render finish. These works will significantly improve the thermal performance of the dwelling, contribute to an improved EPC rating and ensure compliance with current building regulations.

The proposed material palette has been carefully considered, seeking to change the render finish from the existing pink roughcast to a smooth off-white render. Historic photographs indicate that the property was originally finished in an off-white colour, with the pink render introduced by a previous owner in the late 1970s. The proposed finish is considered more sympathetic to the character of the dwelling and the wider Conservation Area.



Photograph (circa 1960)

Access & Parking

The existing vehicular access from the public highway is retained. Parking provision would remain unchanged and sufficient to meet the needs of the dwelling.

Waste

No changes are proposed to waste storage or collection arrangements.

4.0 LANDSCAPE

The proposals do not involve any changes to the existing landscape, which would be retained in its current form.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed development incorporates a comprehensive range of sustainability measures aimed at significantly improving the environmental performance of the existing dwelling. These include insulating the existing timber walls and upgrading the building fabric to enhance thermal efficiency and reduce heat loss. The proposals also allow for the improvement of the existing heating system to provide a more energy-efficient solution. Photovoltaic panels are proposed on the roof to support on-site renewable energy generation.

The existing windows will be refurbished and/or replaced, as appropriate, and will be upgraded to incorporate double-glazed units to improve thermal performance while maintaining an appropriate domestic appearance.

Where possible, materials will be locally sourced to reduce embodied carbon and support sustainable construction practices. In addition, the proposed extension will be constructed in accordance with the latest Building Regulations and is intended to exceed minimum regulatory standards in terms of energy efficiency and thermal performance.

Importantly, the proposal prioritises the retention and upgrading of the existing dwelling rather than demolition and replacement. The reuse of the existing building fabric represents a sustainable approach, significantly reducing embodied carbon associated with new construction and minimising construction waste. This strategy aligns with current best practice, recognising that the retention and retrofit of existing buildings plays a key role in reducing overall carbon emissions.

Collectively, these measures will result in a substantial improvement to the dwelling's overall energy efficiency and environmental performance, in line with national planning policy objectives promoting sustainable development, carbon reduction, and the transition to a low-carbon built environment.

6.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Heritage Assets

The lock-up is a small early to mid-19th century structure constructed of clunch beneath a slate pyramidal roof. It is designated for its historic and communal significance as a surviving example of a village lock-up and contributes positively to the historic character of Ashwell.

The Ashwell Conservation Area derives its significance from its historic village form, traditional building materials, varied roofscape and collection of heritage assets which collectively contribute to its special architectural and historic interest.

Assessment of Significance

Ashwell Conservation Area

The application property is not itself a heritage asset and makes a neutral contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. Its contribution is primarily through its established residential use, scale and relationship with surrounding development.

The significance of the Conservation Area in this location is derived principally from the historic village character, traditional materials, and the presence of the nearby listed lock-up.

Grade II Listed Village Lock-Up

The listed lock-up derives significance from its historic fabric, evidential value, rarity and historic function. Its setting allows the structure to be appreciated as an independent historic feature within the village.

The existing bungalow has no historic or architectural relationship with the listed structure and makes only a limited contribution to its significance.

Heritage Impact Assessment

Impact on the Conservation Area

The proposal has been developed through pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, during which concerns were raised regarding the originally proposed fully glazed west-facing gable.

In response, the design was revised to remove the high-level glazing and reduce the overall extent of glazing visible from the public realm. These amendments significantly reduce the prominence of the extension when viewed in relation to the listed lock-up and the wider Conservation Area.

The proposal retains the established bungalow form and does not introduce a scale, massing or design approach that would appear intrusive within the street scene. The replacement of the existing flat-roofed element with a more coherent pitched roof form and the use of a off-white render are considered sympathetic to the character of the area.

The proposal would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Ashwell Conservation Area.

Impact on the Setting of the Listed Building

The proposed works are confined to the existing dwelling and do not involve any alteration to the Grade II listed lock-up.

The lock-up remains physically separate from the proposed development, with its historic fabric, form and appearance unaffected. Key views of the listed structure remain available and its significance will continue to be readily appreciated.

The proposal therefore preserves the setting and significance of the listed building.

Level of Harm

Having regard to Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal is considered to result in no harm to the significance of the Grade II listed lock-up or the character and appearance of the Ashwell Conservation Area.

The proposal preserves the significance of designated heritage assets and fully satisfies the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Mitigation and Design Response

The design has been refined following pre-application advice to minimise potential heritage impacts. Key amendments include:

- Removal of the previously proposed full-height glazed gable.
- Reduction in the extent of glazing on the west elevation.
- Retention of a simple roof form consistent with the existing dwelling.
- Selection of a more traditional off-white render finish.

These measures ensure the proposal remains sympathetic to both the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed building.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed development represents a considered, proportionate and sensitive response to the existing dwelling and its context. The scheme has been carefully designed to retain the established bungalow form, improve the functionality and environmental performance of the property, and respond appropriately to its location within the Ashwell Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed village lock-up.

Following pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, the design has been refined to address heritage concerns, ensuring that the proposal preserves the setting and significance of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The modest scale of the extensions, together with the carefully considered materials and detailing, ensure that the development remains subservient to the host dwelling and integrates sympathetically with its surroundings.

The proposal will not result in harm to designated heritage assets, neighbouring amenity, or the wider street scene. Furthermore, the scheme delivers significant sustainability benefits through improvements to the building fabric, enhanced insulation, upgraded glazing, renewable energy generation and the retention and refurbishment of the existing dwelling, resulting in a substantial improvement in energy efficiency and long-term environmental performance.

Overall, the proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, including those relating to sustainable development, good design and the conservation of the historic environment, together with relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, including Policies SP13, HE1, D1, D2 and D3, and Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Policies ASH3 and ASH4. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in planning and heritage terms and are respectfully submitted for favourable consideration.