

Pentangle Design Group

Planning and Design Statement

For the replacement Dwelling, including basement, swimming pool(s) + Garden Pergola and Kitchen at
35 Grays Lane, Hitchin

1.0	Introduction	p.2
2.0	Local Characteristics	p.3
3.0	The Proposals	p.5
4.0	Flooding	p.6
5.0	Trees and Landscape	p.7
6.0	Highways, parking and Cycles Considerations	p.8
7.0	Scale and Street Scene	p.9
8.0	Use and Amount	p.10
9.0	Internal Layout and Personal Access	p.10
10.0	Access / Sustainability	p.11
11.0	Amenity for Residents	p.12
12.0	Proposed Site Plan	p.13
13.0	Relevant Local Planning Policy	p.14
14.0	Relevant Nation Policy	p.17
15.0	Response to the Pre-App	p.19
16.0	Planning Statement	p.24
17.0	Conclusions	p.31
A.0	Appendix A	Front of Existing House
A.1	Appendix B	Garden/ Tree photo
A.2	Appendix C	Garden/ Tree photo
B.0	Appendix D	Pre-App Report
B.1	Appendix E	Submitted Pre-App drawings
B.2	Appendix F	Refusal Notice



June 2026
Revision

1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement supports a full planning application for a replacement dwelling at 35 Grays Lane, Hitchin.

The proposal seeks to replace the existing house with a high-quality, energy-efficient family home designed in a neo-Georgian architectural language, incorporating a basement level and a second storey contained within the roof form.

These proposals have been amended following re-assessment of the pre-application advice as well as the recent refusal which was reviewed through a meeting with the Case Officer prior to this application.

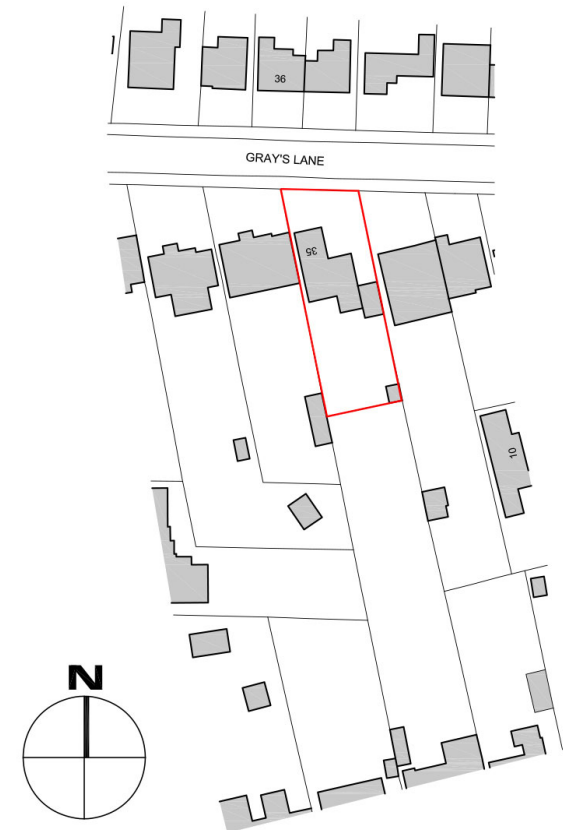
During this meeting, it was agreed that the proposals would be found generally acceptable subject to a few minor amendments which are believed to have been accommodated.

This statement details the adjustments, revisions and changes made to the proposals during the course of the planning history.

The application is accompanied by the following specialist reports prepared by others:

- Energy Statement
- Flood Risk Statement
- Drainage Strategy
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)
- Daylight and Sunlight report
- Arboricultural Report

The statement demonstrates how the proposed development responds positively to the site context, local character, planning policy, and good design principles, while delivering a sustainable and attractive home for future occupants.



2.0 Local Characteristics

Grays Lane is characterised by a mixture of detached properties of varied architectural styles, generally set back from the road with generous front gardens and mature landscaping. The area exhibits:

- A predominance of traditional forms with pitched roofs. Forward central and asymmetrical projecting architectural lines
- Variety of street scene properties; predominantly with a double aspect nature with attached garage, in facing brickwork and in render
- Materials including red brick, render, tile hanging and clay roof tiles, there are examples of slate roof tiles, but these are generally accepted that they are not in-keeping with the locale
- Varied but generally spaciouly wide plots where the properties fill the site width.

A rhythm of houses that, while not uniform, creates a pleasant suburban character.

It is noted that the street scene includes primarily detached and semi-detached homes. There are plots where flats are located within the street scene.

Where detached plots are located, the generally sit within 1.4 and 0.9meters from their corresponding boundaries

The replacement dwelling has been carefully designed to respect this established context. Its scale and proportions are consistent, and often improved upon following analysis of neighbouring homes, and the proposed form sits comfortably within the existing street scene while offering an uplift in architectural quality.



Image Above (top):

Plot to the west of application site, note double aspect and design

Image Above (Bottom):

Property on the Grays Lane, included to demonstrate the broad variety of architectural styles immediately within the context





Image Above:

Plots immediately to the right (East) of the proposal site.

Note the double aspect and garage position/ composition.

Both plots extend the full width of the site plot allowing for side access to the east of each unit.

Central feature architectural element, announcing the front

entrance has been included within the design.

The right-most plot in this image has recently been approved and provides habitable accommodation to the ground, first and second floor, much like this application and proposal

3.0 Proposals

The proposal seeks approval for a replacement two-storey dwelling with a basement and second floor within the roof.

The key aspects of the design include:

- Neo-Georgian architectural style, using red brickwork, stone cappings and brick arch detailing.
- High-quality powder-coated aluminium sash-style windows, design to compliment and be appropriate for the façade.

A restrained and elegant frontage framed by symmetrical window arrangements.

A tiled pitched roof form with a crowned roof element which enables accommodation in the roof without excessive massing.

Windowed dormers, clad in lead are proposed in a uniform fashion

at second storey level. These have been revised to be subordinate to the frontal aspect.

A basement providing leisure, storage or ancillary accommodation.

Car parking is retained on site using the existing "in" and "out" gate arrangement, allowing safe vehicle circulation. A garage, with internal measurements of: 3.0m x 7.0m, as required under the SPD for North Herts.

The garage has been purposefully designed to integrate into the classically symmetrical design, but not be such that it jars with the geometry.

The positioning of the proposed dwelling is such that it does not intrude on neighbouring properties or the boundaries.

The building will primarily utilise a timber frame construction to maximise thermal performance and reduce embodied carbon.



4.0 Flooding

A dedicated Flood Risk Statement accompanies this application and confirms:

The site is located within a low-risk area with no significant fluvial or surface water hazards.

Mitigation measures are incorporated into the proposed drainage strategy.

The basement has been designed with appropriate waterproofing, drainage and resilience measures. The development therefore complies with NPPF requirements, the local Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and best practice for developments including basement levels.



5.0 Trees and Landscape

The proposals respond to respect root protection areas for those trees retained.

It has been necessary to remove vegetation and create a clearing within the existing garden which had been neglected for many years prior to the recent change in owners of the property.

While unnecessary loss of vegetation has been a principle guide to the proposals, much of the foliage has been deemed un-exceptional and not retainable in its quality and provision to the wider scheme.

A landscape plan accompanies this application and provides:

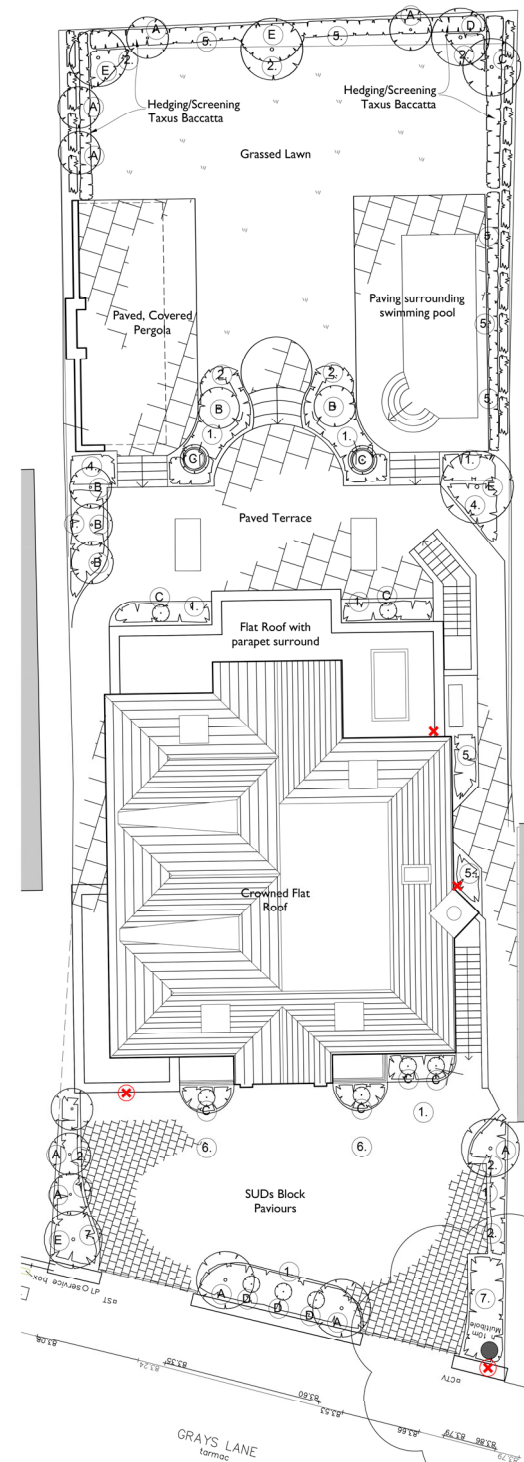
- Retention of trees and foliage where feasible.
- New soft landscaping enhancements including lawned areas, shrub planting, quality trees and ornamental trees.

- Improvements to biodiversity consistent with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Hard landscaping, including driveways, is designed to be sympathetic to the setting while maintaining drainage performance by being of SUDS category and being freely draining.

Within the garden areas the landscape design is such that there are pockets of controlled planting suitable for the locations and for the design intention including evergreen planting around the pool area and interesting pleached trees chosen for their yearly flowering cycle bringing interest to the garden.

An Arboricultural Report is submitted alongside this application and reaffirms the principles as laid out in the proposals as well as detailed explanation of what can, will and will not be retained as part of this scheme.



6.0 Highways Considerations

The property benefits from an established vehicle access arrangement with separate “in” and “out” access. These accesses each benefit from an existing and established drop kerb to each cross-over.

These cross-overs are intended to remain in place and have been utilised as part of the replacement front boundary wall design.

The new wall has been designed so that there is visibility of pedestrians and of vehicles along this 30mph zone.

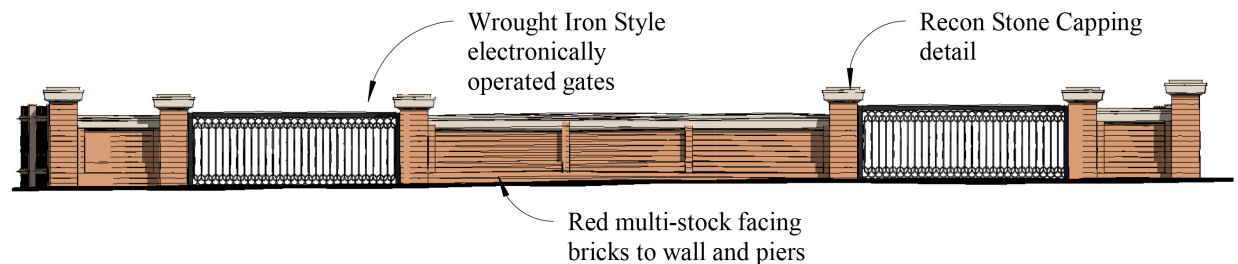
There is consultation in place that this residential street may become a 20mph zone. Should these changes be implemented, these proposals will far exceed the necessary visibility lines required by the Highways Authority.

Gates have been designed into the scheme ensuring:

- Safe ingress and egress to Grays Lane.
- Controlled access into and out of the proposed dwelling plot
- Minimal vehicle conflict on the highway.

Sufficient on-site parking suitable to meet local standards for a dwelling of this scale has been designed into the proposals. These revised proposals allow for additional parking and maneuverability to the front of the property by nature of the front elevation being pushed back into the plot by 1meter.

The development does not intensify vehicle movements beyond the current residential use and therefore has no adverse impact on the local highway network.



7.0 Scale and Street Scene

The dwelling has been designed to sit comfortably within its plot and the surrounding context.

The design and scale of the width has taken into account the general arrangement of dwellings on the Grays Lane, taking note that most dwellings typically fit the width of the plot with an access down one side for rear garden access.

In the design of the dwelling, other key considerations included:

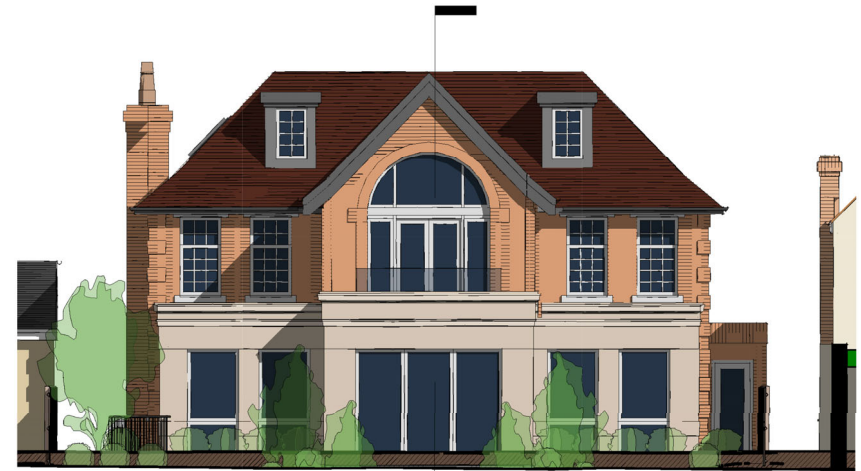
- The ridge height, which has been designed to be consistent with both neighbouring properties.

Through discussions with the local authority there has been a significant reduction following the pre-app stages and previous submission.

The ridge is proportional to both dwellings and does not overly dominate the street scene by the nature of the pitch to the front elevation.

- The massing is broken up with the use of a principal storey above ground floor and a modestly scaled roof form accommodating the second storey.
- The massing is further broken up the central gable feature as well as the single storey garage element projecting out at ground floor
- The basement ensures additional accommodation needs are met without increasing the above-ground bulk.
- The front elevation maintains residential proportions and enhances the character of the area through high-quality detailing.

The rear of the property has been designed so that there is a single storey ground floor element only, design so that neighbouring amenity is not overshadowed



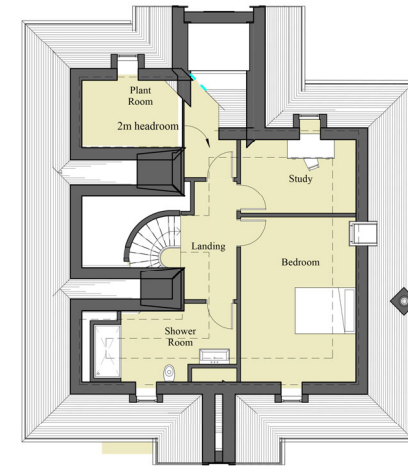
8.0 Use and Amount

The proposed development remains in residential (C3) use, replacing an existing dwelling with a new family home.

The amount of development has been determined by:

- The need to provide a modern home with sufficient living and bedroom space.

- The opportunity to deliver additional space within the basement and roof without over-development.
 - Maintaining generous garden spaces to front and rear.
- The proposal does not represent over-intensification and remains in keeping with the established suburban character.



9.0 Internal Layout and Personal Access

The internal layout provides a logical and functional arrangement of rooms supporting modern family living. Key features include:

- Clear separation of living, kitchen/dining, and utility spaces on the ground floor.
- Bedrooms on upper levels, including accommodation in the roof with

appropriate headroom and daylight levels.

- Basement areas for ancillary or leisure use, designed with safe and compliant means of escape.

Personal access to the building is level and convenient, ensuring inclusivity in accordance with Approved Document M guidance.



10.0 Access / Sustainability

The development incorporates several sustainability measures:

The sustainability strategy for the development follows a fabric-first approach, supported by low-carbon building systems and future proofed infrastructure, ensuring long-term environmental performance without compromising architectural quality.

- Timber frame construction for improved thermal performance and reduced embodied carbon.
- High-performance aluminium frame glazing systems, incorporating triple glazed elements where appropriate.

G value and U values will be carefully considered in this aspect of the development.

- High levels of insulation with careful airtightness detailing will be employed with the construction detailing of the design

- The reduced use of concrete and mortar also supports sustainable construction principles, particularly in relation to the basement structure.
- Waste generation and material sourcing are better controlled through the use of timber frame construction.
- Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) for low-carbon heating and hot water.
- Utilising local employment and materials
- EV charging points will be installed within the garage
- An MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery) system will be incorporated into the construction strategy, typically recycling 80-95% of internal heat from extracted air
- A Building Management System, making the home smart in all aspects, including heating and lighting will also be

incorporated into the home system, enabling direct control and understanding of the buildings performance.

- Passive design strategies, including glazing placement and performance have been incorporated to ensure passive daylighting as well as a strategy for reduced overheating and cooling in the property.

The proposal therefore achieves a strong balance between heritage-inspired architecture and modern environmental performance.

As can be seen by the accompanying Energy Statement, it has been possible to achieve a 65% carbon reduction; an improvement of 35% from the recommended North Herts Policy requirements.

Bins storage will be at the front of the property as marked on site plan drawings and the ground floor plan. Bins will be wheeled out by the residents to the kerb-side on bin collection days, and brought back in for storage.

11.0 Amenity for Residents

The new dwelling provides excellent amenity for the future occupants through:

- Generous internal room sizes, including extended ceiling heights and extended window proportions ensuring the home provides healthy living standards
- High levels of natural light and ventilation.

Again, through integration of large glazing and the MVHR system

- Private rear garden space significantly exceeding minimum standards.

Including incorporating a variety of planting and trees which will also enhance the wildlife environment

- Good privacy distances to neighbouring properties

including no overlooking to neighbours through obtrusive side aspect glazing

- Acoustic benefits from the timber frame and high-performance glazing.
- A retained non-intrusive amenity to neighbours by incorporating cinema, gym and swimming amenity to the basement area where high-performance acoustic solutions will be installed, preventing undue noise and annoyance.

By locating all leisure and plant-intensive uses below ground level, the proposal ensures there is no visual, acoustic or amenity impact beyond that of a conventional family dwelling.

Overall, the proposal delivers a comfortable, high-quality home that meets and exceeds modern expectations.



12.0 Proposed Site Plan

The accompanying site plan included within this submission illustrates:

- Building footprint, orientation and relationship to boundaries which are carefully set back to ensure building distances are appropriate to neighbours as well as preventing any undue overshadowing.

Distances include 1.9meters on the western boundary and 1.3m eastern. This exceeds similar properties immediately adjacent to these proposals.

The property; 37 Grays Lane sits along the boundary line immediately adjacent to these proposals, on its western boundary it is 1.0m from the boundary. 32 Grays Lane sits approximately 1.4m off the boundary.

- Retained access points and driveway layout which utilises established highways access
- Position of retained and new landscaping, including reduced levels of paving, reducing overlooking to neighbouring gardens
- External amenity areas, including grassed areas, location of the kitchen garden/ pergola and garden swimming pool
- Parking and driveway locations
- Planting and new tree locations including proposed varieties
- Bird and bat box locations

The arrangement has been developed to respond sensitively to site constraints and ensure efficient use of the plot as well as an intentional philosophy to improve the plot, the context and create wildlife habitats.



13.0 Relevant Local Planning Policy

The following policies are relevant to the redevelopment of residential plots and replacement dwellings:

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Supports development that enhances the sustainability and quality of the district.

A replacement dwelling with improved energy performance and modern construction aligns strongly with this objective.

It is hoped that the authority will agree that this document provides strong evidence in support of this policy

Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Requires high-quality design that respects character, delivers sustainable construction, and enhances the built environment.

These proposals achieves this through:

- Sensitive massing, use and selection of materials.
- Timber-frame construction.
- Integration of low-carbon technology.
- Use of local employment for construction
- Building design and orientation of glazing

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

Requires development to deliver high environmental performance, including efficient use of resources.

The proposal's timber frame, ASHP and high insulation levels respond positively, including those reasons cited throughout this document

Policy NE3 – Biodiversity

Requires development to protect and where possible enhance biodiversity.

This application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and includes landscaping improvements.

Where it has not been possible to retain trees and shrubbery within the site, supporting evidence and reasons have been provided for removal of these.

The new scheme has been designed to further enhance biodiversity within the site.

Policy D2 – House Extensions, Replacement Dwellings and Outbuildings

Replacement dwellings should:

- Be appropriate to the scale and character of the site and surroundings.
- Not be materially larger in scale unless justified.
- Respect spacing, privacy and amenity.

The proposed dwelling, though enhanced architecturally, sits comfortably in the street scene and maintains appropriate massing thanks to the use of the roof space and a basement to avoid excessive above-ground bulk.

While the existing property is recognized as a single storey dwelling (bungalow), it is believed that this is not the best use of the plot – ie, would be considered under-utilisation of the site.

These proposals submit a suitable family dwelling, in-line with this policy providing good

accommodation for a large family seeking a good quality home with additional 'benefits' within that dwelling.

The scale of the visible proposed dwelling is commensurate with adjacent dwellings and those found locally.

The existing dwelling is of poor quality and remains uninhabitable due to poor maintenance. The dwelling is deemed to be of low architectural quality as well as not being fit for renovation.

There is damp, mold and dilapidated structural construction throughout meaning that retaining the existing building for maintenance is not financially viable.

The replacement, therefore, within a modern, high-standard dwelling fits in this location.

Spacing of the development is no more onerous than any dwelling on Grays. It is submitted that the spacing on the width of the site is 'better' through careful design

Policy D3 – Protecting Living Conditions

Ensures that new development protects neighbouring amenity in terms of privacy, sunlight, daylight and noise.

The proposal maintains appropriate separation distances and garden depths.

The neighbouring amenity remains unaffected by the proposals and submits that the amenity is improved through a proposed reduction in paving and garden levels to the rear of the site.

Policy NE7 – Reducing Flood Risk

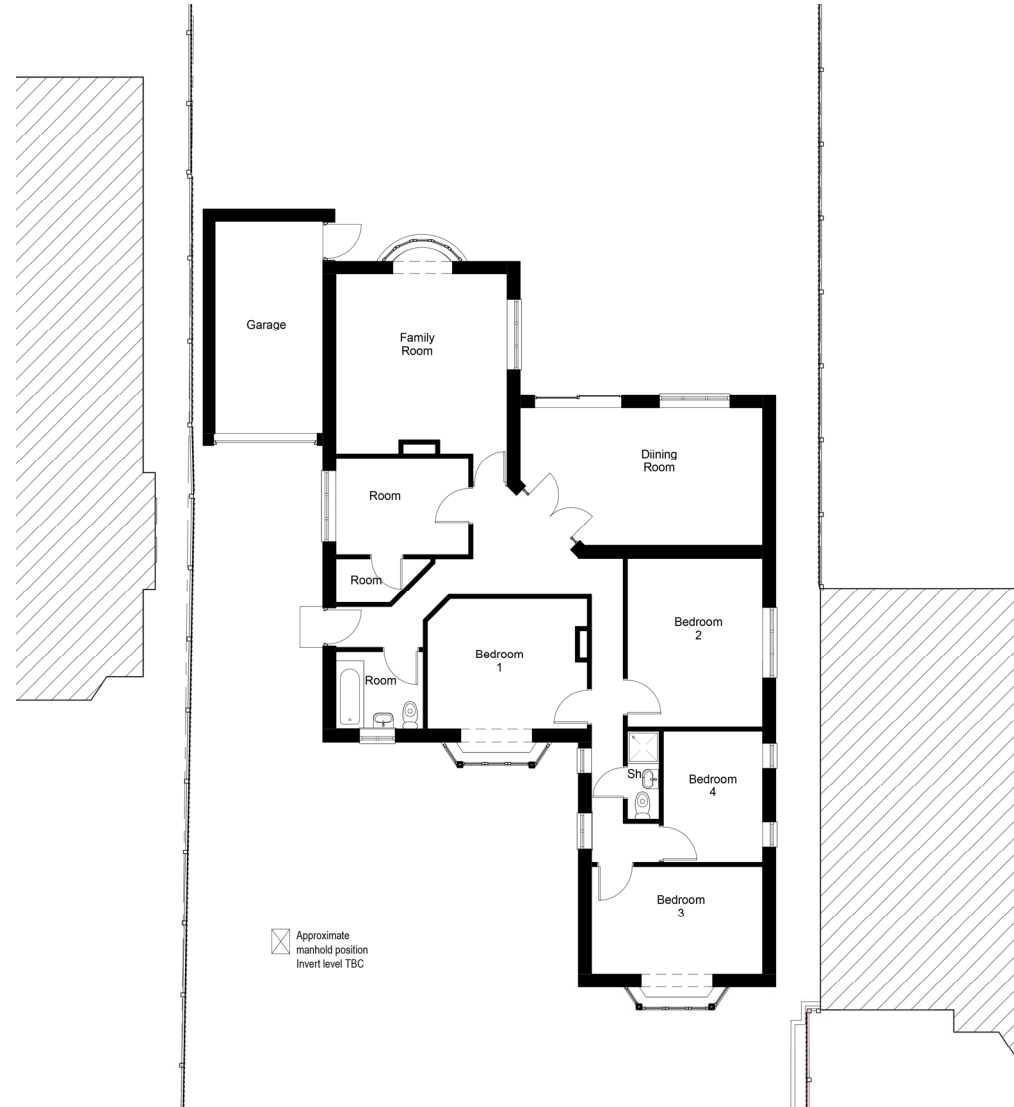
Requires a flood risk assessment for relevant sites and appropriate mitigation.

The accompanying specialist report addresses this fully.

Policy T2 – Parking

Requires parking provision in accordance with local standards.

The proposal retains the existing “in” and “out” arrangement and provides parking fully in line with expectations for a dwelling of this scale.



14.0 Relevant National Planning Policy

The following NPPF sections are relevant to replacement dwellings and the enhancement of existing housing stock:

NPPF Paragraphs 7–12 – Achieving Sustainable Development

These paragraphs reinforce that planning should support sustainable development by improving the quality of the built environment, ensuring a mix of homes, and enabling well-designed places.

A replacement dwelling that significantly improves energy efficiency, architectural quality and long-term usability aligns fully with these aims.

These proposals also submit a larger family home with improved design and quality from the existing dwelling on the site

NPPF Paragraphs 124–131 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

The NPPF encourages developments that optimise site potential, improve the quality of housing, and respond to local character while allowing for innovation.

The proposal achieves this by:

- Delivering a high-quality dwelling design which utilises the plot.
- Provision of a architecturally interesting and characterful dwelling fitting well into the grays Lane street scene
- Using modern construction techniques (timber frame, ASHP) which enhance the quality of the home
- Enhancing the appearance of the site and its relationship to the street scene and the properties to

the east and west.

- Innovating on the 'standards of living' through provision of additional amenity elements within the scheme, including basement cinema, swimming pools, gyms and work-out studio
- Optimized use of a dwelling plot

NPPF Paragraph 130 – Upgrading Existing Housing Stock

This paragraph highlights the importance of development that:

- Functions well over its lifetime, which will be the intention of the dwelling, including allowances for improvement of the layouts, if required in the life-span of the dwelling through floor spans that allow internal wall flexibility
- Allowance of generous room sizes, including generous connecting halls and landings which would enable access to those who might require enhanced space standards
- Improvement on the housing stock generally
- Improves established neighbourhoods through design and architectural character

- Adds to the overall quality of the area.

A replacement dwelling that significantly outperforms the existing property in sustainability and design positively meets this objective.

NPPF Paragraph 159–169 – Flood Risk

Supports proposals that avoid increased risk from flooding and require site-specific assessment where necessary.

This application is accompanied by a comprehensive Flood Risk Statement and drainage strategy.

NPPF Paragraphs 119–121 – Efficient Use of Land

Replacement dwellings are supported where they make effective use of land without overdevelopment.

The proposal respects the established spacious character of the area.

15.0 Response to the Pre-App

A pre-app was acknowledged on the 2nd October 2025 with a return date set for the 13th November.

Unfortunately, the report was not made available ahead of this application submission.

These proposals have been developed having full regard to the key matters typically raised by the Local Authority, including scale, massing, neighbouring amenity, highways, flood and drainage as well as design quality.

These proposals have therefore been submitted in a comprehensive and robust form to support an efficient and timely determination of this application.

It is understood that any supplemental or subsequent adjustments to this application will be available due to the report having not been made available.

The applicant remains open to proportionate refinements where required and agreed.

~

Following the submission of the Full Plans Application, which Revision A of this document was submitted also, the Pre-App response was received.

The following context within this section makes reference to the pre-app comments where relevant and requiring justification.

Further into this document, a thorough examination of the planning history has been explored to identify areas of revisions and discussions that have been had with the Local Planning Authority and the Case Officer.

The Pre-app notes:

I raise some concerns with the scale and bulk of the proposed replacement dwelling, based on the plans submitted. The bulk of the dwelling would have some harm on the streetscene in my view given the large crown roof which is contrary to local context..

You may wish to reduce the height of the eaves and ridge height to sit within the neighbouring properties better.

During the course of design process, the scale and 'bulk' of the dwelling was considered in more detail. The eaves and ridge lines were also considered further and these were reduced height to assist in mitigating the impact to both the street scene and to the neighbouring properties.

It is believed that the overall sense of scale and apparent size of the property is therefore improved and more in-keeping with the street scene and character of Grays Lane.

The pre-app submission and submitted proposed front elevation/ street scene have been presented in this section to show

the careful re-alignment within the design.

Note the significant reduction in the ridge line to the roof which assists in removing 'bulk' from the overall design and improving the visual of the proposal.

The Pre-app goes on to note:

No indication of the proposed materials other than an impression on the submitted plans. I would hope to see materials that reflect the area of Hitchin and not slate roof as not in keeping with this part of Hitchin.

A comprehensive and detailed material matrix has been included within this full plans application.

Careful consideration has been given to the selection of materials, including a re-facing brick pallet and dark-red plain roof tile allow the proposal to settle into the street scene.



The Pre-app notes:

... the proposed balcony at first floor on the rear elevation, I would have concerns about the potential impact of overlooking given the proposed dwelling would sit between the neighbouring dwellinghouses and the proposed dwellinghouse is tight to the shared boundaries and the relatively small rear garden in comparison to the neighbouring properties. I would like to see the balcony removed from any future planning application.

The Pre-app notes:

Given the increased height of the replacement dwelling, there is likely to be some additional impact upon the front elevation of No. 33 with the projection of the garage close to the shared boundary. This increase in height may result in an overbearing impact upon the occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling. I would request a streetscene plan showing the proposed heights and relationship of the neighbouring properties, showing any changes in ground levels. I would like to see a daylight and sunlight plan also given that the neighbouring dwellings and the host property are staggered and I would be mindful of the depth at first floor and potential impact on the neighbouring properties.

The existing property FFL is 83.75, it is proposed to reduce this level by 250mm to 83.50.

The external levels locally will be re-laid to suit.

The garage will sit 150mm below the FFL of the proposed dwelling at 83.35. the top of the parapet is proposed to be 3.0m from external ground level.

Image below:

Note overgrown shrubs and foliage overhanging neighbouring boundary.

It is noted that these provide the same, if not more onerous screening to the neighbouring property than that of the proposed garage



The Pre-app goes on to say:

... it is recommended that any side facing windows, particularly those at first floor level, are obscure glazed in order to minimise the potential for overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers.

It is noted that the drawings submitted note all flank and side elevation windows are to be obscure glazed

The pre-app concludes the section of "Amenity of Future Occupiers/Neighbours as saying:

*It is considered that the proposed development would not result in any unacceptable impact
It is considered that the proposed development would not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers provided the concerns raised above are*

addressed either on plan or within the design and access statement prior to submitting an application.

It is felt that this is a positive contribution to the report and believed that this detailed design statement helps to reinforce.

Further into the report it is noted that these proposed:

"... provide sufficient living accommodation within the replacement dwelling".

"The site would be accessed off the existing driveway ... would feature an integral garage and minimum of two parking spaces on the front drive. This would be sufficient to meet the minimum parking requirements set out in North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031."

It is noted that a detailed landscaping plan has been submitted with this application.

It is also noted that the applicant has declared this application a self-build and therefore the BNG net gain rules do not comply. It is, however, believed that the landscaping plans and development generally improves the overall area in both BNG and in aesthetics for the Grays Lane.

The report discusses the Climate Change Emergency as motioned into place in May 2019.

A comprehensive Energy Statement has been submitted as part of this application within which it is believed each point has been noted and responded to. EV charging points, although a single element noted, are included along with numerous other ways of improving and intentionally implemented to improve the sustainability of this proposed dwelling.

16.0 Planning Statement and Background

Background

This application has been submitted following the Council's rejection of an earlier application, refused on 15th April 2026 for the following 3 reasons:

The proposed development, by reason of its size, bulk and scale, design, siting and appearance, would be excessive and out of character with the site and proposal does not comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 and also paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Insufficient details have been submitted to demonstrate that the access arrangements adhere to guidelines in, or are in accordance with, 'Manual for Streets (MfS)' and HCC Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy guidelines as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and

Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4).

By reason of the proposed forward projection to the proposed replacement dwelling and scale relative to No.31 and 33 and the siting of the garden kitchen and pergola structures along the boundary of No. 33, the proposal would result in an unacceptably dominating and over

bearing presence on the front and rear gardens of the neighbouring properties. This would cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers of no 33 and fails to meet the policy requirements of policies SP1, SP9 and D3 of the adopted Local Plan and the core principles and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

It is important to note at the outset of this revised application that prior to the submission of the previous application we had followed our usual custom in cases such as this

to submit a pre-enquiry request to the Council for advice upon the proposed development for a replacement dwelling. The request was submitted on 26th September 2025, acknowledged on 2nd October and promised a detailed advice letter outlining the major planning issues, constraints and requirements by 13 November 2025.

In the event we didn't receive a response until 17th December 2025. The response to our request was positive in terms of the principle of replacing the existing bungalow dwelling with a larger two storey dwelling. The principal issues covered in the response dealt with the relevant Policies against which the development would be assessed.

Extensive discussions and negotiations took place with the case officer aimed at overcoming the concerns expressed in the pre-app response. To that end we were advised that we could submit amended plans during the process and this we did. However, we were later advised that amended plans would not be accepted and the

formal decision was taken on the application.

The prospect of appealing the decision was considered, but although amendments to the original scheme were sought and provided, these did not appear to have been acknowledged in the description on the formal decision notice, nor within the list of refused plans that appears on the formal decision notice. An appeal against the decision was considered, but given that the amended plans were not formally accepted or listed on the decision notice the view was taken that we should continue a dialogue with the Council, with the intention of resubmitting this revised application.

The remainder of this planning statement will firstly look briefly at the changes to the previous scheme, amplified in the Design and Access element which will look at the evolution of the details and highlight the changes to overcome the 3 reasons. And secondly at the Policy context, taking a lead from those Local Plan Policies cited on the refusal notice and against which the earlier development was assessed and decided.

The principal changes

Reason 1 - the 'bulk' of the proposal has been reduced by moving the front elevation into the plot, reducing the overall footprint and internal floor area over the basement, ground, first and second floor.

The roof line is brought back following this revision. The eve's line of the roof has been reduced from a 400mm projection to 300mm, which has the effect of reducing the ridge and roof lines a little further, as can be seen on drawing 3929/129. The garage parapet has been reduced by a brick course (75mm).

This Design and Access Statement has further demonstrate, through reference to the collection of revised drawings, the manner in which the new size, bulk and scale, design, siting and appearance of the revised dwelling would be neither excessive nor out of character with the site and its surroundings. This being so the proposal now complies with the Local Plan and NPPF policies cited in reason 1.

Reason 2 – Following consideration of the comments provided by the County Highway Authority the access details were amended and shown on new drawing (3959/49).

Reason 3 – Although the Daylight and Sunlight report submitted with the application justified the forward projection of the dwelling and that in daylighting terms it would not affect the amenity of the neighbour properties, the front elevation has been pulled back creating more of a stagger between the frontages of Nos 33 and 37.

The relevant policies

The site is located within the Settlement of Hitchin wherein Local Plan Policy SP2 supports development of housing within the settlement boundary. The site is considered sustainable and appropriate in principle for development to meet the majority of the development needs of the District in accordance with Policy SP2 of the Local Plan. So, the principle of replacing the existing dwelling with another in this residential area has never been an issue. It is the details of the



development that has led to the refusal of the previous scheme.

Reason 1 cites Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Policy D1 deals with sustainable design and sets out that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that respond positively to the site's local context, create or enhance the public realm, and reduce energy consumption and waste.

This part of Grays Lane features a variety of dwelling types, sizes, and designs. The existing dwelling is a detached bungalow set back from the public highway by a large driveway. It is considered that the existing dwelling does not respond positively to its local context or enhance the public realm. This replacement dwelling takes the opportunity, as the plans and Design and Access Statement has demonstrated, to provide a dwelling that does respond positively to the site's local context, and in doing so enhance the public realm.

Policy D2 deals with replacement dwellings and outbuildings and states that they will be granted where:

- c) The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of the site; and
- d) The location of the proposal does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene or area.

In the case of this revised application the various amendments that have been made to the previous scheme ensure that the replacement dwelling, in terms of its location and design would not conflict with any of the provisions of Policy D2.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF deals with achieving good design and states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that, in the context of this replacement dwelling, it should:

function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).

Given the nature and extent of the discussions on the design of this replacement dwelling and that which has evolved as a result, it is submitted that this revised development meets every one of the relevant design requirements of the NPPF.

In terms of reason 1 of the refusal of the previous application and the location and design of this replacement dwelling, we see no sound basis upon which this revised application could or should be refused on design grounds.

Reason 2 relates to the consultation response received from Hertfordshire Highways that insufficient details had been submitted to demonstrate that the access arrangements adhere to

guidelines in, or are in accordance with, 'Manual for Streets (MfS)' and HCC Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide and cites policy guidelines as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4).

On the 23rd January the Highway Authority advised that the wall at the frontage of the site should be 0.6m or below and that a pedestrian visibility splay of 0.65m x 0.65 in both directions of the site should be provided in the interest of highway safety. Achievable levels of inter-visibility between drivers exiting the site and other highway users (vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) were not demonstrated on the submitted plans. Manual for Streets (Table 7.1) requires a 2.4m x 43m visibility splay for a 30mph road in both directions of a vehicular access to ensure good vehicle to vehicle visibility when exiting the site. We were advised to correct this and demonstrate the required visibility in the interest of highway safety.

Whilst negotiating the size and design changes to the original



submission, on 26th January (in response to the Highway Authority's concerns), we provided the case officer with an email and drawings that included the information required by the Highway Authority. The relocation of a lamp post was removed from the drawings. A new drawing (3959/49) was submitted with both entrance and exits annotated for the 30mph zone visibility, emphasising that these are existing entrance/exits.

Pedestrian visibility was shown on the same drawing to achieve this the openings between the brick piers was widened to ensure that the pedestrian visibility conforms to the requirements, without any reduction in the height of the walls.

This information and the measures adopted to overcome the highway objections has not been recorded on the Council's web site and there does not appear to be any response from the Highway Authority other than that which it made on 23rd January.

Reason 3 cites unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers of No 33 and fails to meet the

requirements of Policies SP1, SP9 and D3 of the adopted Local Plan and the core principles and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Policy D3 of the Local Plan states that planning applications will only be granted where the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

The case officer's report upon this issue stated that the proposed dwelling appears to project approximately 7 metres forward of the neighbouring property and has a materially greater impact upon the street scene and upon the relationship with both neighbouring properties. The outdoor kitchen with a 4m high chimney was alleged to be unneighbourly.

These issues were highlighted by the neighbour at No 33, although his comments are recorded as being neutral on the Council's web site. However, these concerns have been addressed in the revised scheme. The application was accompanied by a Daylight and Sunlight report that concluded that taking into account the overall high level of compliance with the BRE

recommendations, and the mitigating factors set out in section 4 of that report, the proposed development was acceptable in terms of daylight and sunlight.

More specifically the front elevation has now been moved back, lessening the alleged harm to the street scene and its relationship with No 33. The impact is not now material. In addition, the chimney has now been removed from the 'outdoor kitchen'. Again this avoids any impact upon No 33 and ensures that the revised development would not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions, such that it complies with the requirements of Local Plan and NPPF Policies.

Summarising the development in the context of the Local and National Planning Policies against which this application will be assessed it is submitted that this revised proposal meets all of the relevant provisions of those Policies cited in the 3 reasons for the refusal of the application.



16.0 Conclusions

The replacement dwelling at 35 Grays Lane represents a well-considered, high-quality proposal that:

- Respects and enhances local character, through considered, well-placed and thoughtful architectural design
- Delivers a sustainable, energy-efficient and performative modern home.
- Retains the existing access configuration and provides adequate parking, including the integration of EV charging points
- Protects existing good quality trees where possible and improves landscape setting for the context of

Conclusions

the dwelling as well as for habitat purposes.

- Sits comfortably in the street scene due to carefully controlled scale and architectural detailing.

The proposal complies with relevant local and national planning policies and will make a positive contribution to the built environment. Approval is therefore respectfully sought.

The positive pre-app report and feedback also provides good reason for further support of this application

With the above in mind, the drawings associated with this application along with the supporting evidence, we welcome the Local Planning Officer to welcome these proposals and grant approval.

A.0 Appendix A

Existing Dwelling frontage



A.1 Appendix B

Tree/ Garden Photos – note the ill health nature of the planting



A.2 Appendix C

Tree/ Garden Photos – note the ill health nature of the planting

