

**PLANNING & COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE)
(AMENDMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2006**



DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENT

April 2025

FOR EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS
AT
15 SWAN STREET, ASHWELL, BALDOCK
HERTFORDSHIRE SG7 5NY

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

Client

Mr & Mrs Rhodes

15 Swan Street
Ashwell, Baldock
Hertfordshire
SG7 5NY

Local Authority

North Herts Council

Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

Agent

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This Design and Access/Heritage Statement is submitted to meet the requirements of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006, as they relate to the extensions and alterations as described, at 15 Swan Street, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 5NY.

Our clients – the new owners of the property, propose to extend and modernise the property to provide an improved layout and to enhance the ‘kerb appeal’ of the house.

The proposals also seek to improve the thermal performance of the property, providing increased levels of insulation and an enhanced heating source.

The Application Proposals

Background

This application is for Householder Planning Approval for modest single storey extensions and additions to the property, conversion of an existing storage area to the rear of the existing double garage, changes to the fenestration utilising an alternative materials palette, and replacement windows and doors throughout the property together with internal alterations to improve circulation areas internally.

This document should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings, OS maps & site photographs.

Application drawings:

Drawing No. L-0 Rev A	– Existing Ground, First Floor and Garage/Store General Arrangement Plans & Elevations. Site Location/Block Plans
Drawing No. L-02 Rev B	– Proposed Ground and First Floor General Arrangement Plans and Elevations.
Drawing No. L-03 Rev B	– Proposed Enlarged Ground and First Floor and Garage/Annexe General Arrangement Plans.

In accordance with DCLG Circular 1/2006 this Statement explains the principles applied to the proposals. It is set out by reference to the following: -

- **Context**
 - a) Physical Context
 - b) Policy Context

CONTEXT

Context relates to the physical context of the property (the site and its surroundings).

I. Physical Context and Heritage Statement

The application site lies within the Ashwell settlement boundary, and designated Conservation Area (Amended February 2023).

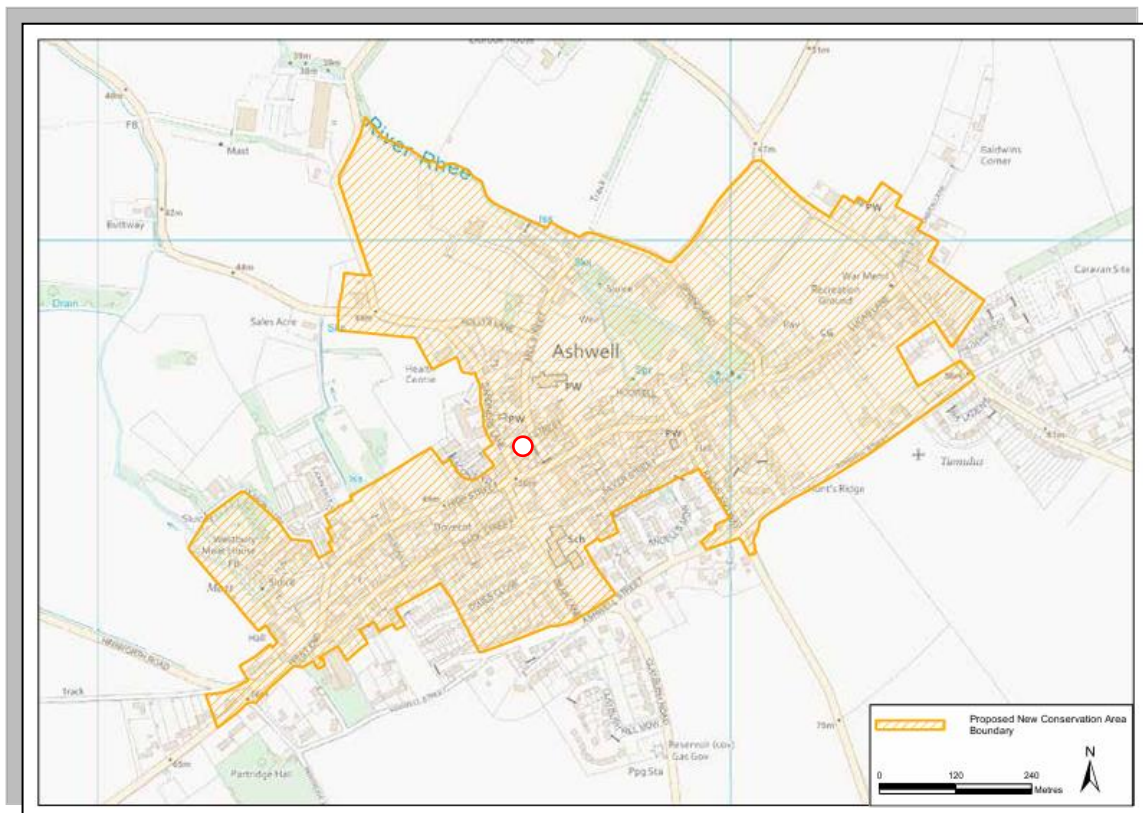
Ashwell is located approximately 5 miles to the north-east of Baldock, and 6.5 to the west of Royston.

The village of Ashwell is located on the site of a spring which feeds the River Rhee, one of the main sources of the River Cam. The village is mostly within a good state of preservation, and contains a number of statutory listed buildings, and a wealth of architecture spanning several centuries.

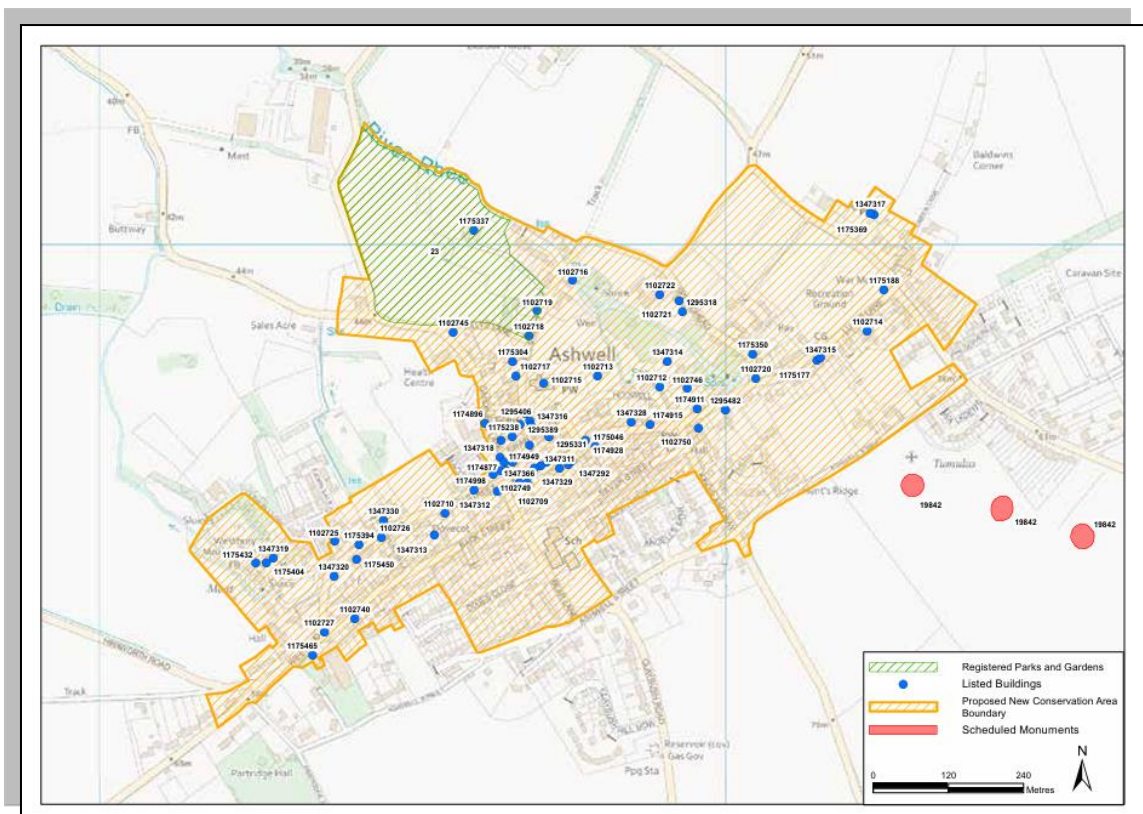
In recent decades, the village has expanded with modern housing extending beyond the Conservation Area boundaries to the south and east in particular.

There are seventy-three designated heritage assets located within the Ashwell Conservation Area boundary, including timber framed houses, agricultural buildings, monuments and the Grade I listed Church of St Mary as indicated on the second map overleaf.

The Conservation Area boundary encompasses much of the village as illustrated on the first map overleaf (Amended for the revised boundary alterations in 2023) and reflects the scale of the Anglo-Saxon settlement which remains legible in Ashwell's historic core. Ashwell was a planned market town, and by the time of the Domesday Book was one of five boroughs in Hertfordshire.



Map illustrating the designated Ashwell Conservation Area boundary.

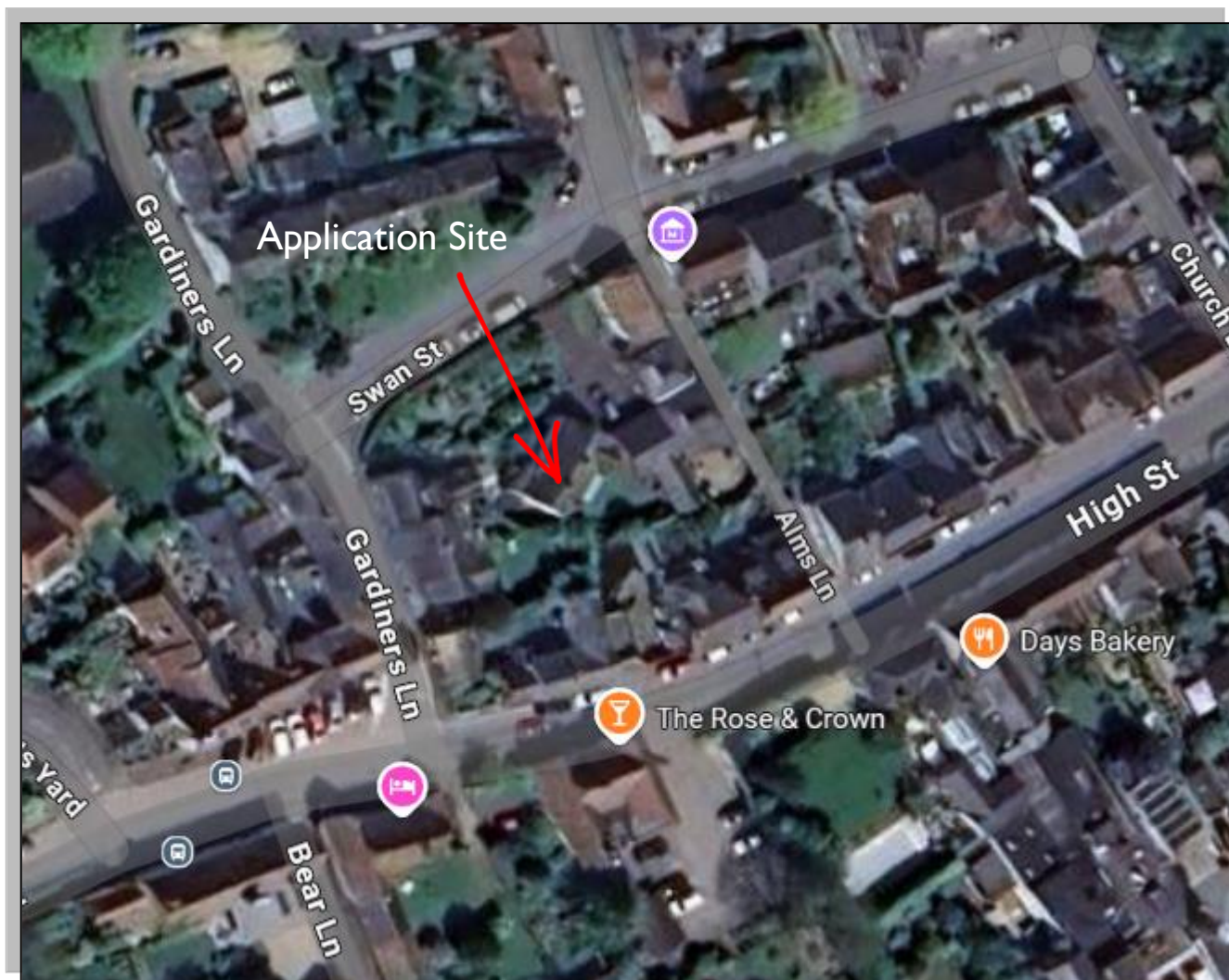


Map illustrating listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and Scheduled Monuments within the Ashwell Conservation Area boundary.

Listed buildings closest to the application site include the Grade II* listed Town House (Ashwell Museum) directly to the north-east (see photograph below), and the Grade II listed numbers 2 & 4 Gardiners Lane to the west.



The application site lies outside of the Green Belt, and any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape).



Aerial view of the application site.

2. Policy Context

This proposal has been considered with regard to the relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan (2011-2031): –

LP16 – Areas of Archaeological Significance

LP28 – House Extensions

LP57 – Residential Guidelines and Standards

SECN12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

SECNI6 – Conserve and Enhance Historic Environment

XDI – Sustainable Design

XD2 – House Extensions, Replacement Dwellings, Outbuilding

XD3 – Protecting Living Conditions

And National Planning Policy Framework December 2024.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraphs 218 and 219 of the NPPF reads as follows:

The policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. Plans may also need to be revised to reflect policy changes which this replacement Framework has made. However, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

Given the age of the development plan, assessment of the proposal against the relevant policies will be limited to those which accord with the NPPF. The degree of consistency of the Local Plan policies with the framework will be referenced within the discussion section of the report where relevant.

Within a conservation area, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out guidance relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It notes that local authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. With regards to non-designated heritage assets, such as locally listed buildings, the NPPF guides that local authorities should make a balanced judgement, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Previous Planning History

There is no previous planning history available to view on the North Herts Council planning website.

According to history provided by The Ashwell Museum, 15 Swan Street (The Application Site) was once a general store known as Tower Cottage where locals purchased various items such as tea, sweets, candles and groceries.

An existing barn in the location of the current dwelling was demolished in 1987, and the present house constructed.

3. Site Analysis

The Application site is accessed off the south side of Swan Street, close to the intersection with Mill Street to the north, and Gardiners Lane to the west.

The property is not listed, but is located within the Ashwell Conservation Area, and in close proximity to some listed buildings as described previously within this statement. The dwelling itself is set back from and orientated at approximately 45 degrees to the road frontage and is therefore not as visible or prominent from the street scene as some other properties.

What is likely to be considered the 'principal elevation' faces north-west; however, the front door is currently located within the north-east elevation adjacent to the driveway.

The house currently lacks a little presence and character with an obvious front door and open porch over, part of which this application is seeking planning permission for.



Photograph indicating the north-west elevation of the property.



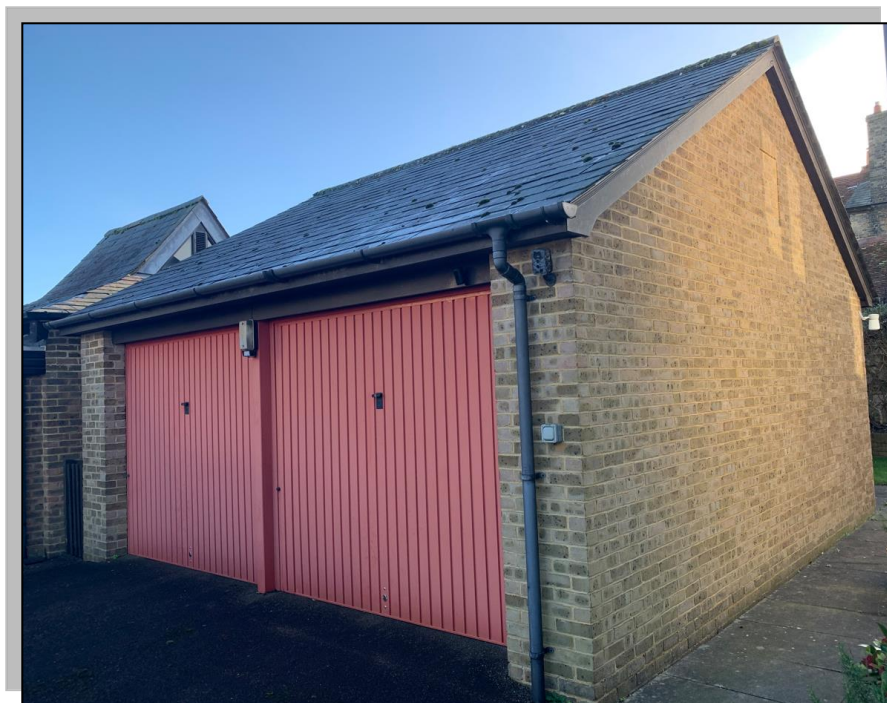
Photograph indicating the north-east elevation of the property containing the principal entrance.



Photograph indicating the south-east elevation of the property overlooking the rear garden.



Photograph indicating the external door from the utility room to the south-west corner of the property. The outdated door joinery and porch can be seen, and relatively bland nature of the painted render walls.



Photograph indicating the front elevation of the existing double garage to be retained.



Photograph indicating the side elevation of the existing store facing the rear lawn and to the rear of the double garage to be converted into ancillary residential accommodation (guest bedroom/study).

5. Access

No alterations are proposed to the existing site access off Swan Street.

The principal front door of the building will be relocated from the north-east elevation to the north-west elevation within the aperture of an existing full height glazed window. An open porch would also be constructed.

The floor level of the proposed single storey extension to the south-east of the house facing the rear garden will match the existing house level, as will the bay windows illustrated to the north-east and south-west of the house.

The floor level of the converted store to the rear of the garage providing ancillary residential accommodation will be raised by approximately 150mm after the installation of floor insulation.

6. Landscaping

No trees or hedges will be removed or detrimentally affected by these proposals and no significant additional planting is proposed. There do not appear to be any Tree Protection Orders on or directly adjacent to the site, although the site is located within the Ashwell Conservation Area which provides a blanket protection to all trees and hedges.

7. Protected Species

There is no evidence of existing bat roosts in the location for the proposed building works or within the roof spaces of the property and outbuildings which are easily accessible to inspect. However, if bats or any other protected species are discovered during the development, works will stop immediately, and Natural England contacted for further advice.

8. Design Solution

Layout, Scale and Appearance

8.1 The proposal is to remove an existing conservatory to the 'rear' elevation of the property.

This has been constructed with low level painted render walls with stained three-quarter height windows and fully glazed doors, all under a glazed roof. The conservatory suffers from extensive heat loss in the winter months and overheating in warmer weather.

It is proposed to construct a single storey extension in this location to a similar external footprint area of 13m². The would be of a simple appearance with dual pitched roof and glazed gable to the rear above bi-folding doors and windows to each side of the extension.

8.2 Other modest additions include a bay window to each side of the property which would not only provide character to the house externally but would also provide additional seating areas internally together with the introduction of further natural light into the property. The bay windows would have a combined external footprint area of 5m².

The front door and sidelights would be relocated into the aperture of the existing full height glazing on the north-west elevation. A new Oak framed open porch would provide a more obvious principal entrance, and shelter from the elements.

The back door from the utility room would be bricked up, and glazed porch structure removed.

- 8.3** It is also proposed to convert an existing store area to the rear of the garage into ancillary residential accommodation all within the current footprint, providing a guest bedroom and shower room. One additional window is to be provided together with a rooflight into the rear roof slope.

- 8.4** The final proposal is to enhance the external appearance of the property with the introduction of stained horizontal feather edged timber boarding to all elevations of the house, and front/side elevation of the garage/store. This would create the 'barn effect' of the previous structure on the site, and we consider would sit more harmoniously into the street scene and Conservation Area.

Some areas of the existing rendered walls will be retained as an alternative relief from the boarding.

The proposed extensions as previously described will include facing brickwork in a yellow stock colour to match the low-level house plinths and garage/store and boundary walls.

Existing chimney stacks are to be demolished completely as these are currently redundant and in addition, detrimentally affect circulation space within the property. A twin flue (painted black) would be introduced to serve a log burning stove in the lounge area and would be just visible above the ridge line of the house.

- 8.5** All windows and doors are to be replaced with a style that would enhance the property in the Conservation Area more than the existing. It is therefore proposed to install windows and doors from The Residence Collection in a Heritage Style (R9). Refer to details overleaf.

Thermal performance would also be significantly improved.



100mm

A++ energy ratings



23 standard colourways



Huge choice of accessories



Double or triple glazed



A CLEVER BLEND

OF OLD & NEW

Residence 9 is a window and door system designed to authentically replicate 19th Century timber designs. The traditionally elegant flush exterior and stylish decorative interior create that classic aesthetic.

A combination of design, innovation and technological advancement is how Residence 9 outperforms many other systems.

Your R9 journey starts here...

9. Conclusion

- 9.1** A full evaluation and assessment of the existing buildings within the application curtilage has been undertaken during this process.

The proposed extensions are modest in overall size and scale, and would replace an older conservatory to the rear of the property which does not contribute to the appearance of the house or overall Conservation Area.

In addition, it is considered that none of the proposals described would detrimentally affect any neighbouring property or the setting of any listed building within close proximity to the site.

External materials are intended to enhance views of the property from the street scene and important views in the Conservation Area.

- 9.2** All mature trees and hedges will be retained on the site.

- 9.3** It is considered that the proposal does not conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Policies of the Local Plan.

The extensions and conversion of the store to the rear of the garage would continue to be used in connection with the current residential use.

Inigo Architecture

**SCHEDULE OF EXTERNAL MATERIALS AND
SURFACE FINISHES**

**FACING BRICKS FOR EXTENSIONS TO MATCH THE EXISTING
GARAGE AND LOW LEVEL PLINTH BRICKS –
YELLOW MULTI BRICKS (OR SIMILAR APPROVED)**



ROOF TILES TO ALL EXTENSIONS –

**(SANDTOFT 20/20 INTERLOCKING PLAIN CLAY
ROOF TILES ‘FLANDERS’ TO SUIT PITCHES OR
SIMILAR APPROVED)**



SOFTWOOD WEATHERBOARDING – (STAINED BLACK)

Specification for softwood featheredge:

200mm board 30-6mm Taper

Sound Knots up 15mm considered no defect.

Four knots less than 40mm are permitted in lengths up to 4 meters.

No Wayne.

One dead knot less than 25mm allowed.

No Bark pockets Brown stain, pith, no hole of boxed hart.

Sapwood to be limited. Clear finish.

