

Design, Access & Heritage Statement

January 2025



The Red House, 78 High Street
Codicote SG4 8XD

INTRODUCTION

An application for planning and listed building consent is being made to Hertfordshire District Council for discreet alterations and partial change of use to the Grade II listed structure known as The Red House in the village of Codicote. This Design, Access & Heritage Statement is appended to the application to outline the proposed changes, set out the significance of the building and justify them in the context of its historical importance.

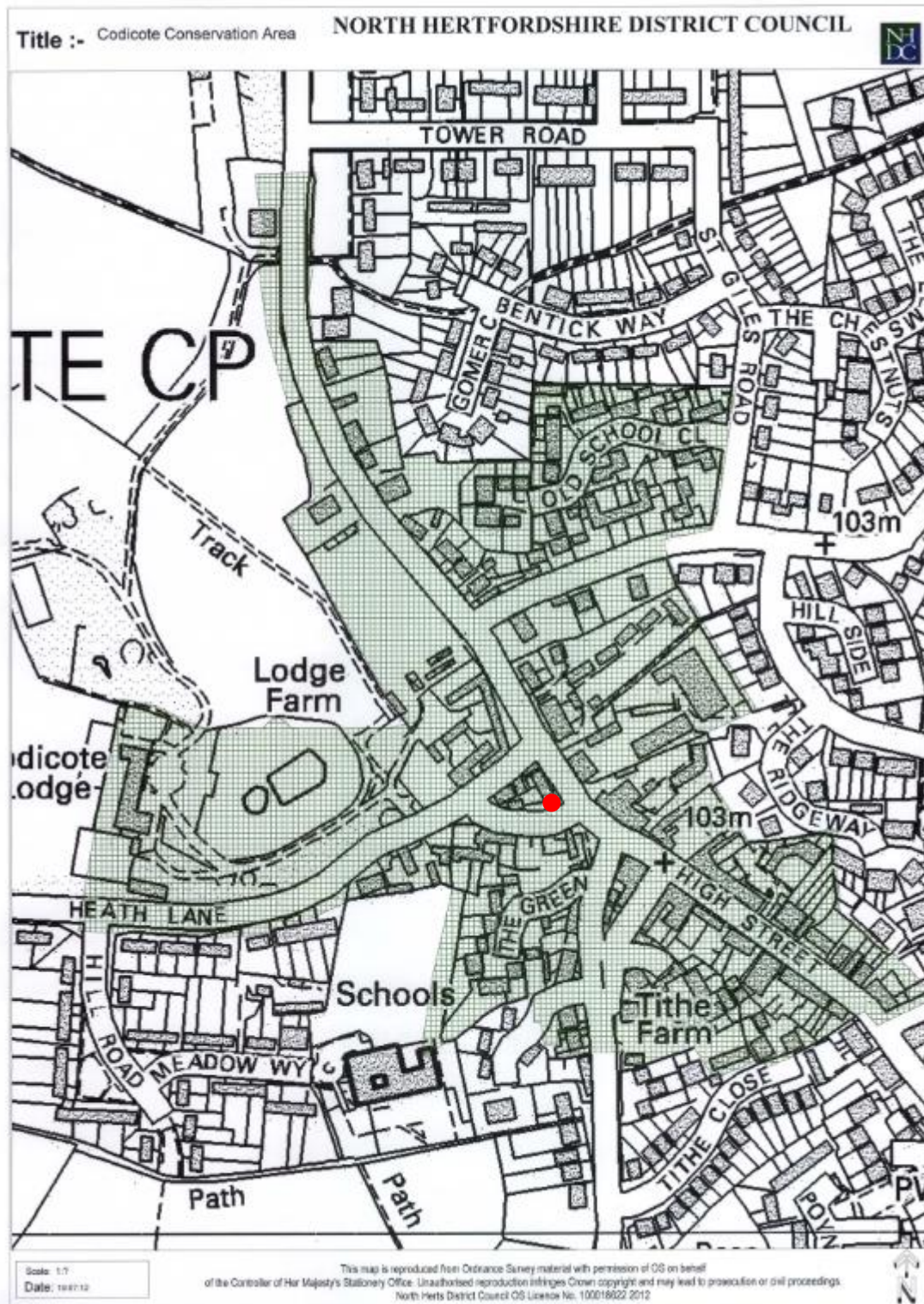


Aerial photo with plot indicated

THE SITE

The Red House is located at No. 78 High Road in the Hertfordshire village of Codicote. The building faces the main commercial street of Codicote with its left flank abutting a small lane connecting to Heath Lane. The main 2 storey brick building is augmented by a single storey, modern built brick double garage at the rear of the plot accessed from the lane and a utilitarian storage shed built of concrete block. An amenity garden of modest proportions featuring several mature trees is situated between the 2 buildings. The Red House sits at the northern tip of the original village green, which was the probable location of the medieval market, with the most prominent local buildings facing it including the original George & Dragon Inn, The Pond House and The Goat Pub all facing. Most of the local shops are situated just to the South. The property was Grade II listed in 1984 by Historic England which notes these details:

House, shop and office. C17 timber framed core. Earlier C18 red brick exterior. Plain tile roof, hipped on S. 2 storeys. 1st floor has 3 original oak cross-bar windows with square leaded lights. Floor band. Ridge chimney stack near S end with joined square shafts. C18 brick and timber frame lean-to at rear forming catslide roof. Modern shops.



Codicote Conservation Area map with plot indicated

The property forms part of the Codicote Conservation Area designated by North Hertfordshire District Council in 1970. The village appears in the Domesday Book and featured a market in the mid 13th century. The Conservation Area comprises the core of the original village and radiates out from the village green along the arterial roads. The remnants of the historical village are largely built of red brick structures with tiled roofs. The Red House features on the left side of Key View 4 from the Character Appraisal excerpted on the following page:



KV4: From outside The Pond House, looking north-west along High Street showing large central buildings with the village green on the left.

Key view 4 from the character appraisal

The Red House is a 3 bay, double storey brick building with a steeply pitched, hipped ended tile roof presenting to its corner plot and a catslide monopitch extending down to the ground floor eaves to its rear. A primary double chimney rises above the roof at the apex of the hip with separate modern chimneys on the rear slope. A gable faced glass bay is located centrally on the garden face. To the front a central door is flanked by shop windows to either side with 3 vertical windows above.



Views of plot from front, side lane, garage face and rear cat slide



Views of the storage block and of the garage from the garden

The Codicote History Society notes that in the early 19th century The Red House housed a grocer's run first by the Hill's then the Lawrence's with both families featured in chapters of their publications. By the 1920s it housed a barber's and boot shop, and subsequently became a newsagent's. That use continued for 40 years until the present owners acquired the building in a deteriorated state which precluded continuing use until refurbishment can take place.

The upper parts of the building would most likely have carried on in residential use and indeed it is noted on the Council Tax list as a residential maisonette although records indicate that it has been empty for some years. The presence of fitted kitchen in 1 of the 3 upper rooms supports this use as does the bathroom located at the ground floor entrance to this accommodation.



A blue plaque from the Heritage Lottery Fund on the front elevation of The Red House identifies the significance of the listed building and augments it with the arcane fact that the prominent London architect Charles Holden lived there from 1902-1907 when he would have been in his late 20s. He is of course best known for his many stations for London Transport from the 1920-30s and the Senate House of the University of London.

Heritage Lottery Fund plaque

ASSESSMENT OF DESIGN PROPOSALS

The new owners of the Red House are locally based and their primary aim is to return the building to a state which will serve the community. A number of local housing developments are currently underway which will augment local residents and increase the need for a range of local sustainable services in Codicote. Their vision is to provide a community café at ground level of the primary building with a self-contained rental flat at 1st floor. Renovations to the garage block would provide a wellbeing studio space. Altogether these proposals would strongly contribute to supporting an active and healthy community.

From the exterior the proposals comprise little which would alter the visual appearance of the building in its context. The café would retain the historic building fabric including the open brick fireplaces with work focussed on making good the existing materials and finishes. The primary space beyond the entrance door would be fitted with a new freestanding servery counter, and seating for customers. The supplementary rooms to the left and rear would provide additional informal seating options. The existing lean-to kitchen to the right at the rear would be renovated to serve the same purpose. A new w/c would be provided for staff and customers adjacent to the existing bathroom the left rear.



Views of ground floor interior – rooms to front



Views of fireplace, rear bay interior & external door to kitchen



External view where new residential entrance door proposed

The residential flat would be fully refurbished and self-contained by forming a new private entrance door from the rear and sealing up the 2 doors which open into the balance of the ground floor café. The existing stair which rises at a very steep pitch under the rear catslide roof would be replaced with a more efficient and compliant layout allowing a new shower room to be formed at ground floor. The remaining rooms comprising a lounge/kitchen and 2 bedrooms would be fully refurbished, with the corridor running across the rear provided with a new conservation style rooflight to allow natural light into the space.



Internal views of 1st floor residential bedrooms



Internal views of 1st floor bedroom & kitchen/lounge

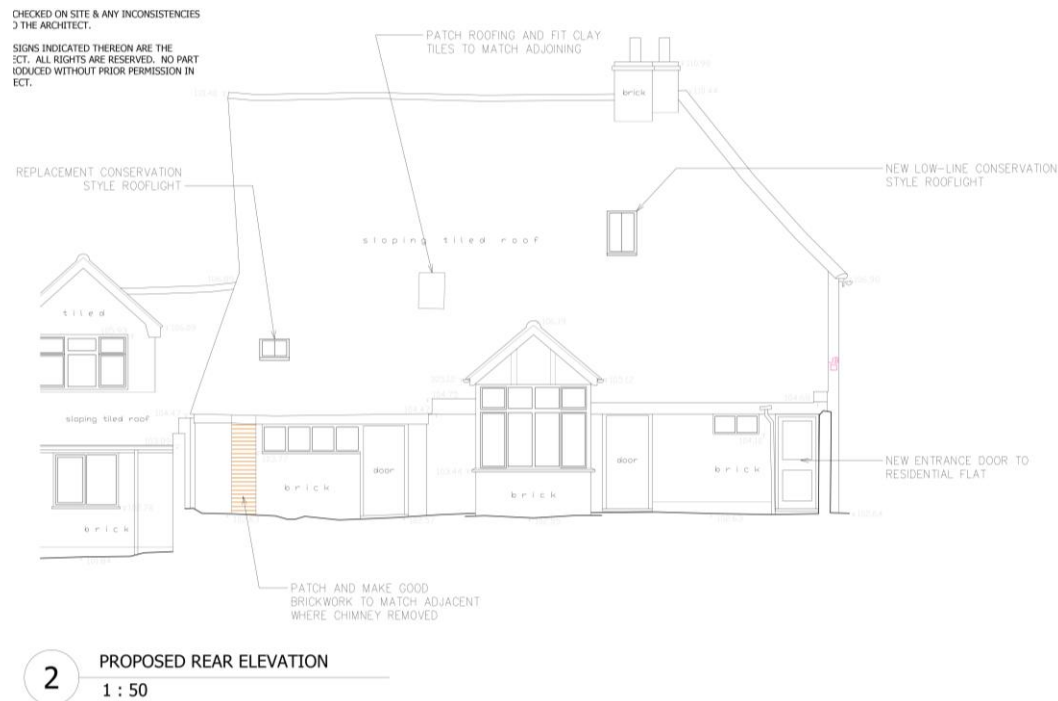
The much altered Red House incorporates a number of architectural features of significance including its external brickwork, casement windows, clay tiled roof forms including the rear cat slide, internal timber structural frame, chimney block and fireplaces. The refurbishment of the internal spaces will not result in loss of any of the historical fabric and the owners' intention is to highlight the features which provide the character they particularly value. The new residential door opening at the rear would be formed in a subservient, later extension of the building which already features a modern high level window serving the existing bathroom. The 2 internal doors which would be sealed shut can be done so without removal of the doors and frames thus allowing reinstatement in future is so desired. The original staircase serving the 1st floor is likely to have been located in the current commercial space so the loss of the existing stair would not represent a significant loss. The introduction of a modest conservation style rooflight in the rear slope would be located on a secondary face of the building, would be of traditional design and therefore in keeping with the integrity of the building while providing much needed natural light to the internal accommodation.

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The ground floor and loft extensions will both need to 'preserve' and 'enhance' the building and terrace it modifies while also protecting the amenities of neighbouring properties. The material palette should reflect prevalent and traditional building materials of the context. The new side wall of the ground floor extension would be formed of London stock brickwork to match the main dwelling and boundary garden walls. Its roof will be finished in slate as will the refurbished outrigger and main roofs of the dwelling. The dormer window would be clad in vertically hung slate to match. Rooflights to the front roof slope would be conservation style models with integral glazing bars and would be set low to the roof tiles in the traditional manner. The formation of new cabinetry at ground floor would be non-permanent and reversible. The new w/c is located where it can readily connect to the existing drainage and again would be reversible in future.



The loss of the 2 chimney stacks through the rear catslide roof would not represent a significant historical loss to the listed building. The extremely slender chimney serving the rear bay windowed room is in an extremely poor condition and has previously been vertically extended or rebuilt, most likely to ensure its termination above the adjacent sloped roof. The proportions of this stack are not particularly stable and therefore problematic. The small stack on the rear wall of the kitchen block is utilitarian in design and again non-compliant with regulations which would require a chimney in that location to be significantly taller to avoid nearby ventilation openings.

GARAGE BLOCK

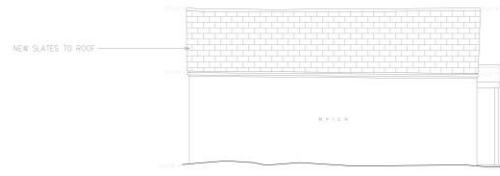
The existing block at the rear of the plot provides 2 enclosed garages accessible via hinged timber doors and a secondary workshop space with a door and 2 windows facing onto the central garden space. The structure is utilitarian in nature and would not warrant listing in its own right although it forms part of the curtilage of the listed building. The garage bays provide clear dimensions 2.4M wide x 4.8M deep which would not comply with modern standards requiring a minimum of 3.0M width to allow unimpeded access into a parked vehicle. The building is inset from the rear boundary providing a private forecourt more readily usable for parking so the loss of the 2 parking bays would not materially contribute to local parking pressure.

Opening up the interior of the building to form a Wellness Studio would provide a space fulfilling the need for an unmet local service. Two new rooflights would allow natural light into the interior enhancing the quality of the studio space without a negative visual impact due to the low pitch of the roof slope. The front elevation of the garage block would be altered to infill the door openings with a new door and 3 windows set in brickwork slightly inset from the existing leaving a vestige of the original rhythmic purpose of the building. A small porch would provide cover for the entrance and demarcate its purpose. The clay tiled roof would be replaced with new slates providing a more appropriate waterproofing on the low pitch; both materials are typical locally and slate is present on the pair of Heath Lane cottages immediately next door.

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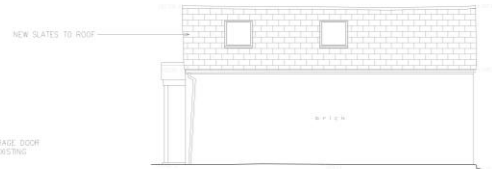
5 PROPOSED GARDEN ELEVATION
1 : 50



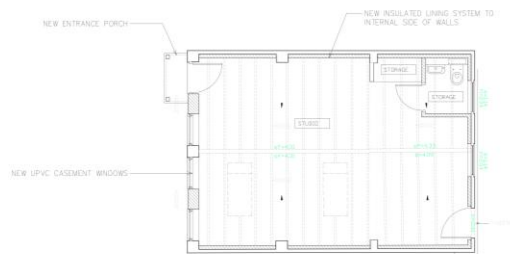
6 PROPOSED NORTH SIDE ELEVATION
1 : 50



3 PROPOSED STREET ELEVATION
1 : 50



4 PROPOSED SOUTH SIDE ELEVATION
1 : 50



1 PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1 : 50



2 PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
1 : 50

CONCLUSION

The design proposals are purposefully modest in scope and have been devised to work with the materials and extend the language of the existing listed building. The alterations to the existing garage block, while more significant, would raise the detailing standard of the utilitarian structure in a way that would enhance the context. The works would preserve or enhance the character of the Codicote Conservation Area and of the Grade II listed building. All new works would be carried out in high quality materials and with details to match the appropriate elements of the existing building.

The repurposing of the property would safeguard the future of the heritage asset and enhance the provision of local services which are highly valued by the community. The Codicote Neighbourhood Plan prepared by the Parish Council (submitted 30th October 2024 and currently under consultation) confirms the value placed on the local shops and services and the aim to see these expanded. The incremental accretion of refurbishments in the village will improve the context and encourage further works.