



CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

Michael Neocleous BSc(Hons), Dip Arch(Hons) RIBA

Design And Access Statement – 46 Kneesworth Street, Royston



1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the existing office building at 46 Kneesworth Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5AQ to 8 self-contained residential flats, together with a modest roof extension, dormer windows, associated parking, landscaping and ancillary works.

The statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and relevant national and local planning policy. It should be read alongside the submitted drawings and supporting technical documents.



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The purpose of this statement is to explain the design rationale behind the proposal and to demonstrate how issues of design, heritage, access and inclusive environments have been fully considered.

2. Site Description and Context

2.1 The Site

The application site comprises a 2½-storey terraced building located on the corner of Kneesworth Street and Green Drift. The building has historically been used as offices and is currently vacant. Vehicular access is taken from Green Drift, with the principal elevation addressing Kneesworth Street.

The site lies within an established residential area of Royston and is located within the Royston Conservation Area. The building is identified as a Building of Local Interest, making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2.2 Surrounding Area

Kneesworth Street is characterised by traditional two and three-storey buildings of red brick construction, with pitched roofs, chimneys, sash-style windows and strong vertical proportions. Dormer windows and roof alterations are present within the wider streetscape and form part of the established character of the area.

The site benefits from a highly sustainable location, within walking distance of Royston town centre, Royston Railway Station, local shops, services and public transport connections.

3. Planning History and Principle of Development

The principle of residential use on the site has been established through recent planning decisions, most notably application ref. 22/02587/HYA, which granted conditional permission for the change of use of the building to residential.

The current proposal differs from earlier schemes by:

Reducing the number of units to 8 dwellings, improving residential quality;

Introducing a roof extension and dormers to achieve compliant internal layouts;

Responding directly to previous reasons for refusal and pre-application advice.



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In principle, the proposal represents the sustainable reuse of a previously developed site in accordance with:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);

North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policies SP1, SP2, SP8 and SP9.

4. Design Principles

4.1 Design Approach

The design approach has been informed by:

The building's status as a Building of Local Interest;

Its location within the Royston Conservation Area;

The need to deliver high-quality, policy-compliant residential accommodation;

Pre-application advice from North Hertfordshire District Council and the Conservation Officer.

The proposal seeks to retain and enhance the existing building, ensuring that any new interventions are subservient, sympathetic and reversible, preserving the building's historic character.

4.2 Layout and Use

The conversion provides:

1 x three-bedroom flat;

4 x two-bedroom flats;

3 x one-bedroom flats.

The internal layouts have been carefully designed to meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards, with good access to natural daylight and ventilation. Communal and private spaces are clearly defined, ensuring a high standard of residential amenity for future occupants.



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5. Scale, Massing and Appearance

5.1 Existing Building

The existing building's scale and form reflect the prevailing historic character of Kneesworth Street, with a pitched roof, traditional proportions and red brick façade.

5.2 Proposed Roof Extension and Dormers

The roof extension and dormer windows have been designed to be visually recessive and subordinate to the host building:

Dormers are set down from the ridge line to maintain roof hierarchy;

The size and depth of dormers have been carefully controlled to minimise visual impact;

Front rooflights are conservation-style and kept to the smallest practicable size.

These elements reflect established patterns of development within the street and have been designed in direct response to Conservation Officer advice.

5.3 Materials

Materials have been selected to match and complement the existing building:

Red brickwork to match the existing;

Natural or slate-effect roofing materials;

Timber windows and doors, with any double glazing designed to replicate traditional profiles;

Traditional detailing retained and repaired where necessary.

This approach ensures the development preserves the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6. Heritage Considerations

The building makes a positive contribution to the Royston Conservation Area. The proposal has been designed to result in less than substantial harm, outweighed by public benefits including:



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Securing the optimum viable use of the building;

Delivering new housing in a sustainable location;

Improving the long-term maintenance and use of a heritage asset.

The proposal accords with the NPPF, particularly paragraphs relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and relevant local heritage policies.

7. Access and Movement

7.1 Vehicular Access and Parking

Vehicular access will continue to be taken from Green Drift, utilising the existing access arrangement. A total of 9 car parking spaces are proposed, comprising one space per dwelling plus one visitor space, reflecting the site's sustainable location and pre-application advice.

Parking is arranged to minimise visual dominance, with opportunities for soft landscaping and tree planting to soften the parking court.

7.2 Cycle Parking

Secure, covered cycle storage will be provided in accordance with Local Plan Policy T2, encouraging sustainable travel choices.

7.3 Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to the building is clear, legible and well defined from Kneesworth Street. Internal circulation areas are designed to be safe, well-lit and accessible.

8. Inclusive Access

The development has been designed to provide inclusive access wherever practicable:

Level or gently graded access routes;

Adequate door widths and circulation space;

Clear wayfinding and safe external routes.

While the constraints of the existing building limit full step-free access to all units, the scheme represents a reasonable and proportionate response within a conversion context.



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9. Residential Amenity

The proposal provides a high standard of amenity for future residents through:

Good levels of daylight and sunlight;

Appropriately sized private and communal spaces;

Acoustic separation between units;

Careful positioning of windows to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy.

The development will not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring properties, in accordance with Local Plan Policy D3.

10. Landscaping and Biodiversity

Although the proposal is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, the scheme seeks to retain existing boundary planting and trees where possible. Soft landscaping will be used to enhance visual amenity, soften parking areas and contribute positively to the site's setting.

11. Sustainability and Climate Change

The proposal supports sustainable development by:

Reusing an existing building;

Providing housing in a highly accessible location;

Incorporating energy-efficient construction methods and materials;

Providing EV charging infrastructure and cycle parking.

These measures align with both national policy and North Hertfordshire District Council's climate change objectives.



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12. Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed development at 46 Kneesworth Street:

Represents a high-quality, context-led design;

Preserves the character and appearance of the Royston Conservation Area;

Delivers much-needed housing in a sustainable location;

Provides safe, inclusive and convenient access for all users.

The proposal fully accords with national and local planning policy and responds positively to pre-application advice. It is therefore considered to be a sustainable and acceptable form of development.