

M Scott / Architectural Design

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

For

Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of 4 no. detached dwellings

At

The Old Grain Store, Southern Green Farm, Rushden, SG9 0SX.



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1. Description of the Proposal

- 1.1. Demolition of an existing redundant agricultural grain store and redevelopment of the site to provide four detached residential dwellings within the established Southern Green Farmstead.
- 1.2. The proposed development comprises two 2-bedroom and two 3-bedroom dwellings. The dwellings are arranged as a small cluster roughly on the footprint of the existing barn, reflecting the scale, spacing and form of buildings within the farmstead and Conservation Area.
- 1.3. Access would be taken from the existing farm access off Bennetts Lane, with on-site parking provided in accordance with local standards.

2. Schedule of Uses

2.1. Existing Use:

- Redundant agricultural grain store (former agricultural use), currently used for low-intensity storage.

2.2. Proposed Use:

- Use Class C3 – Residential, 4 no. detached dwellings:
 - two 2-bedroom dwellings
 - two 3-bedroom dwellings

	Footprint	Garden Space
Existing		
Existing Barn (to be demolished)	510sqm	N/A
Proposed		
Plot 1 (2-bed)	101sqm	117sqm
Plot 2 (3-bed)	129sqm	233sqm
Plot 3 (3-bed)	129sqm	251sqm
Plot 4 (2-bed)	101sqm	117sqm
Total (excluding barn to be demolished)	460sqm	718sqm

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3. Introduction

- 3.1. This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Client in support of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of The Old Grain Store, Southern Green Farm, Rushden, to provide four detached residential dwellings.



Figure 1 – Site Plan

- 3.2. The site comprises a former agricultural grain store located within the wider Southern Green Farm. The building has been retired from its original agricultural use for a significant period and is currently used for low-intensity storage and ancillary activities.
- 3.3. The proposal comprises two 2-bedroom and two 3-bedroom dwellings, arranged as a small courtyard group within the established farmstead. The scheme has been developed having regard to the rural character of Southern Green, its Conservation Area designation and the setting of the Grade II listed Southern Green Farmhouse.
- 3.4. The application follows positive pre-application advice received from North Hertfordshire District Council under reference 26/00239/PRE, dated 16 April 2026. The principle of three dwellings was supported, with the proposed layout considered acceptable in principle. The current scheme has subsequently been refined through the design process, including a reduction in the site boundary to retain the existing hedgerow, the removal of two visitor parking spaces while retaining two visitor spaces, and a change from three detached dwellings to four smaller agricultural-style dwellings.

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Figure 2 – Pre App Proposed Site Plan



Figure 3 – Application Proposed Site Plan

- 3.5. The revised scheme retains the development within the established farmstead and has been designed to reflect its agricultural character through simple building forms, restrained domestic expression, variation in scale and orientation, and a courtyard arrangement. The proposal also incorporates measures to retain existing landscape features and provide appropriate new planting.
- 3.6. This Statement explains the site context, evolution of the proposal, design approach, access and parking arrangements, residential quality, heritage considerations, biodiversity and sustainability measures, and the proposal's compliance with relevant planning policies.

4. Site Context

- 4.1. The site is located at Southern Green Farm, a cluster of agricultural and residential buildings forming an established farmstead. The farm is situated at the north-eastern end of Southern Green and is accessed from Bennetts Lane. The proposal relates to the existing dual-gabled Old Grain Store, which forms part of the established farmstead rather than an isolated building within the open countryside. The site is located on the eastern side of the farm, with Southern Green Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, located within the wider farmstead.
- 4.2. Southern Green is a rural hamlet forming part of Rushden, a Category B village. The application site lies within the Southern Green Conservation Area and the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

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Figure 4 – North Hertfordshire District Council Southern Green Conservation Area Map

- 4.3. The application site boundary has been reduced from that considered at pre-application stage. The revised boundary has been deliberately drawn to retain the existing hedgerow and to reduce the extent of land brought into the development. This also reduces the amount of hardstanding and ancillary development associated with the proposal.

5. Heritage Context

- 5.1. The Southern Green Conservation Area encompasses a small rural hamlet formed around a former triangular green at the junction of Bennetts Lane and Southern Green. Development is limited in scale and arranged in small clusters of wayside dwellings and farmsteads, set within an organic agricultural landscape.

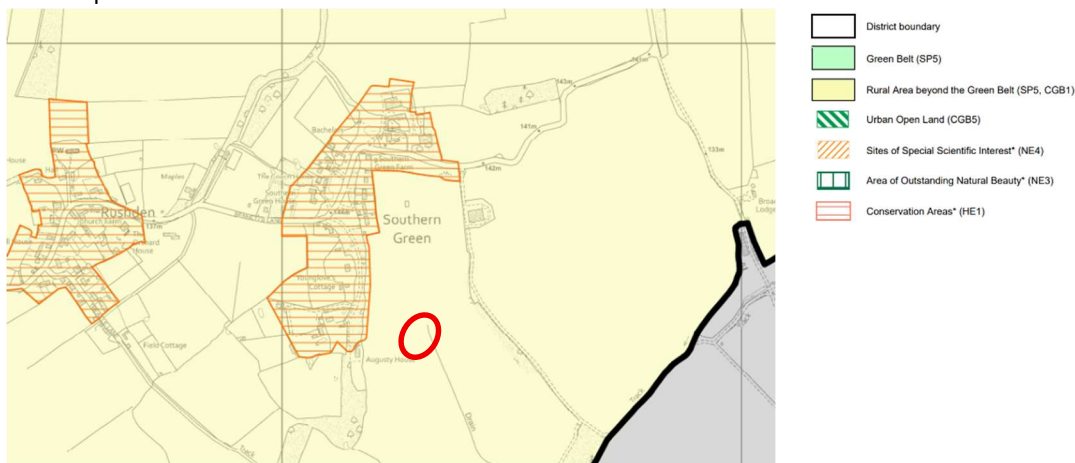


Figure 5 – North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan Great Ashby and Rural Areas Map

- 5.2. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the special interest of Southern Green as deriving from:
- Its dispersed settlement pattern
 - The prominence of farmsteads and agricultural groupings
 - The retention of historic layouts and relationships between buildings
- 5.3. The Southern Green Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, is located within the wider farm setting and forms an important component of the historic development of the hamlet. Within the existing

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western cluster of buildings, a structure has also been identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 5.4. The proposed development has been designed to respond to this agricultural and historic context. Rather than adopting conventional suburban house forms, the dwellings use agricultural building forms as their starting point. The courtyard arrangement, simple building forms, restrained domestic expression, barn-style entrances, limited and carefully positioned window openings and subordinate garages are intended to reinforce the established farmstead character and maintain the relationship between buildings that contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.5. The variation in width, ridge height and orientation between the individual buildings is intentional and reflects the informal hierarchy commonly found within traditional farmsteads. The arrangement avoids a uniform estate-like appearance and instead creates a series of buildings that read as a coherent agricultural courtyard.

6. Site History and Existing Building

- 6.1. The Old Grain Store was originally constructed in the 1970s as a modern agricultural facility with a storage capacity of approximately 1,200 tonnes, incorporating 24 grain bins, a continuous flow drier, and associated conveyor and elevator systems.



Figure 6 & 7 – Photographs of the Old Grain Store

- 6.2. The facility was upgraded over time but became obsolete by 2001 due to increasing harvest rates, dust management issues and health and safety constraints. A new grain store was constructed on the farm in 2001 (Planning Ref: 01/00904/1), at which point the Old Grain Store was retired from its primary agricultural function.



Figure 8 – Google Maps Aerial Photograph Showing New Grain Store Location

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- 6.3. Subsequent uses have included fertiliser storage, machinery storage, firewood processing and general storage. Grain bins were removed in 2006 and 2010, further diminishing the building's agricultural role.
- 6.4. The building benefits from water, three-phase electricity and drainage, and is therefore capable of conversion to residential use.

7. **Relevant Planning History and Established Pattern of Development**

- 7.1. The wider Southern Green Farm complex has a long-established history of residential conversion and diversification, including the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use and other changes associated with the continued evolution of the farmstead. This history demonstrates that residential use, when appropriately scaled and designed, has been accepted as part of the continued evolution of the farmstead.
- 7.2. Key planning history includes:
 - 11/00655/1CC - The importation of clean, inert, waste material to provide an earth bund to deter crime and improve security at the grainstore at Southern Green Farm. NHDC Consultee ONLY Objection raised, application withdrawn.
 - 10/02321/1CC - Proposed importation of clean inert material to provide an earth bund for improved security and screening of the grain store at Southern Green Farm, Rushden NHDC CONSULTTEE ONLY. Objection raised, application withdrawn.
 - 01/00904/1 - Erection of new grain store, driveway and alterations to existing field entrance (as amended by plans received on 27th July 2001). Conditional Permission.
 - 90/01352/1 - Change of use and conversion of agricultural buildings to two dwellings with erection of single storey extension, detached double garage and detached garden storage building and ancillary works (as variation of previous permission Ref. No. 1/354/89 granted 2.11.89) Site and Surroundings. Conditional Permission.
- 7.3. The current proposal follows positive pre-application advice from North Hertfordshire District Council under reference 26/00239/PRE, dated 16 April 2026. The Council supported the principle of residential redevelopment under Policies SP2, CGB1 and CGB4 and considered the proposed layout acceptable in principle, subject to detailed consideration of design, heritage, amenity, access and parking.
- 7.4. The scheme has subsequently evolved from the pre-application proposal for three dwellings to four detached agricultural-style homes, comprising two 2-bedroom and two 3-bedroom dwellings. The revised arrangement remains within the established farmstead and is designed as a coherent courtyard group, drawing on simple agricultural forms and a restrained domestic expression.
- 7.5. The application boundary has also been reduced along the eastern boundary to retain the existing hedgerow. Two visitor parking spaces have been removed, while two visitor spaces are retained within the revised scheme.
- 7.6. The proposal has therefore been refined to strengthen its relationship with the existing farmstead and respond to the Council's advice regarding rural character, heritage, landscape, amenity, access and parking.

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8. Planning Considerations and Class Q Fallback

- 8.1. The existing agricultural building has potential for residential conversion under Class Q permitted development, subject to the relevant prior approval requirements. The pre-application response gave limited weight to this theoretical fallback in the absence of a formal Prior Approval application.
- 8.2. The current proposal nevertheless provides a lower-intensity, design-led alternative to conversion, replacing the existing large agricultural building with four smaller dwellings arranged as a courtyard. This allows the scale, form, orientation and relationship between buildings to be carefully controlled and reflects the established character of the farmstead.

9. Proposed Development

- 9.1. The proposal comprises four detached dwellings:
- 2 × 2-bedroom dwellings, arranged as single-storey agricultural-style buildings with bedrooms accommodated within the roof space; and
 - 2 × 3-bedroom two-storey agricultural-style dwellings.
- 9.2. The four dwellings are arranged around a courtyard in a form that reflects the established pattern of agricultural buildings at Southern Green Farm. The smaller dwellings are located close to the existing farm shed, while the larger dwellings form the remaining sides of the courtyard.
- 9.3. Variation in building width, ridge height and orientation provides a hierarchy between the plots and avoids a uniform suburban appearance. The development remains broadly within the established footprint and location of the existing farmstead.



Figure 9 - Proposed Site Plan



Figure 10 - Proposed Indicative Street Elevation

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10. Scale, Massing and Appearance

10.1. The design takes existing agricultural buildings as its starting point, using simple barn-derived forms and a restrained domestic expression appropriate to the rural setting and Conservation Area.

10.2. The two smaller dwellings have a single-storey appearance with bedrooms within the roof space. Their catslide roofs slope helping to reduce their visual prominence.



Figure 11 - Proposed Plot 1 Drawings

10.3. The two larger dwellings are two storeys but retain an agricultural character through simple forms, restrained window openings, double-height barn-door entrances and subordinate garages.



Figure 12 - Proposed Plot 2 Drawings

10.4. Variation in width, ridge height and orientation between the plots creates a hierarchy and reflects the informal arrangement of buildings within a traditional farmstead.

10.5. The overall courtyard arrangement, scale and massing avoid a suburban form of development and maintain the established rural character of Southern Green. Materials and detailing will complement the existing farmstead and Conservation Area.

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11. Materials Schedule

11.1. The proposed materials have been selected to reflect the agricultural character of Southern Green Farm and the wider Conservation Area. The palette is deliberately restrained, using robust materials and simple detailing to reinforce the agricultural character of the proposed courtyard.

Element	Material / Finish	Description
External walls	Red brick upstand	Low red brick plinth/upstand to the base of the buildings
External walls	Black weatherboarding	Black timber weatherboarding above the brick upstand
Roofs	Clay/plain tiles	Traditional red/brown clay or plain tiles, selected to complement the existing farmstead
Plot 1 & 4 roofs	Catslide roof	Low-pitched catslide roof forms to the single-storey dwellings
Windows	Dark-framed windows	Simple, restrained window openings with dark-coloured frames
Barn entrances	Timber	Double-height timber barn-style entrances
Garages	Timber	Simple timber barn-style garage doors, subordinate to the main buildings
Rainwater goods	Dark-coloured	Simple dark-coloured rainwater goods
Boundaries	Hedgerow / timber fencing	Retained and enhanced hedgerows with simple rural fencing where required
Hard landscaping	Permeable paving / gravel	Restrained and permeable surfacing appropriate to the farmstead setting

12. Residential Quality and Living Environment

12.1. The proposed dwellings provide high-quality residential accommodation, with internal floor areas meeting or exceeding the Nationally Described Space Standards.

12.2. The layout provides functional living accommodation, good levels of natural light and outlook, and appropriately sized private amenity areas. The orientation and positioning of windows have been designed to avoid unacceptable overlooking of neighbouring properties.

12.3. Internal layouts are arranged to provide functional, open-plan ground floor living spaces, supporting modern patterns of family life while maintaining a clear hierarchy between private and shared areas.

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Figure 13 - Proposed Plot 1 Plans



Figure 14 - Proposed Plot 2 Plans

12.4. Bin and recycling storage is provided within the rear gardens of each dwelling, screened behind fencing and positioned to allow convenient access for residents and collection.

12.5. The courtyard arrangement provides a clear relationship between the dwellings, parking and shared movement areas while retaining landscaped space and the existing rural character of the site.

12.6. The orientation and layout of the dwellings have been carefully considered to:

- Optimise natural daylight and solar gain
- Frame and maximise views towards the surrounding countryside, where appropriate
- Avoid visual intrusion into sensitive heritage assets or overlooking of neighbouring properties
- The positioning of windows and principal living spaces allows residents to enjoy outward views across the agricultural landscape
- Private garden spaces are proportionate and sensitively arranged to ensure a high standard of amenity while respecting the wider farmstead character, Conservation Area setting, heritage buildings to the west, and substation.

13. Access, Parking and Movement

13.1. Vehicular access will continue to be taken from the existing farm access off Bennetts Lane via the established farm track. No new access point is proposed.

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13.2. Parking is provided on site in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan, together with secure cycle storage. Two visitor parking spaces and one secure and covered visitor cycle space are provided within the revised scheme.

13.3. The number of visitor parking spaces has been reduced by two from the pre-application scheme and one visitor cycle space has been added. This reflects the revised layout and avoids unnecessary hardstanding while retaining appropriate visitor provision.

13.4. The reduced site boundary and retention of the existing hedgerow also help to limit the extent of hardstanding and maintain the landscaped character of the farmstead.

14. Climate Change and Sustainability

14.1. The proposal responds positively to North Hertfordshire Council's declared Climate Emergency and the advice provided through the pre-application process. Each dwelling will incorporate measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, including solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points.

14.2. The design also makes use of natural daylight and solar gain through the orientation and arrangement of the dwellings. Each dwelling will be designed to achieve a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, helping to reduce water consumption.

14.3. These measures provide a practical and integrated approach to reducing energy use and carbon emissions and support the Council's objective of delivering more sustainable homes.

15. Policy Context and Heritage Assessment

15.1. The proposal has been designed having regard to the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031, the National Planning Policy Framework and the character of the Southern Green Conservation Area.

15.2. The pre-application response identified Policies SP2, CGB1 and CGB4 as supporting the principle of the development. The proposal remains consistent with these policies by relating to an existing agricultural building within the established farmstead and avoiding a materially greater impact on the openness and character of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

15.3. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and as recognised in the pre-application response, the tilted balance is therefore engaged. The four proposed dwellings would make a modest but positive contribution to housing delivery.

15.4. Policies SP1, SP9 and D1 support well-designed development that responds positively to its local context. The courtyard arrangement, agricultural-derived forms, restrained detailing and variation in scale have been developed specifically to reflect the character of Southern Green.

15.5. Policy D3 seeks to protect living conditions. The layout, separation distances and positioning of windows have been designed to avoid unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers.

15.6. Policies T1 and T2 relate to transport, access and parking. The proposal retains the established access and provides appropriate on-site and visitor parking together with cycle storage.

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15.7. Policy HE1 requires development affecting heritage assets and their settings to preserve or enhance their significance. The proposal's scale, courtyard form and agricultural character have been designed to respect the Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed Southern Green Farmhouse. The proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the significance of the listed building and its setting.

15.8. Policy NE4 seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. The reduced site boundary allows the existing eastern edge hedgerow to be retained, with additional landscaping and ecological enhancements incorporated into the scheme. The application site has a total area of 0.198 hectares and therefore falls within the area-based exemption from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) applicable from 6 August 2026. The proposal is consequently not subject to the statutory 10% BNG requirement. A Landscape Plan is provided with the application.

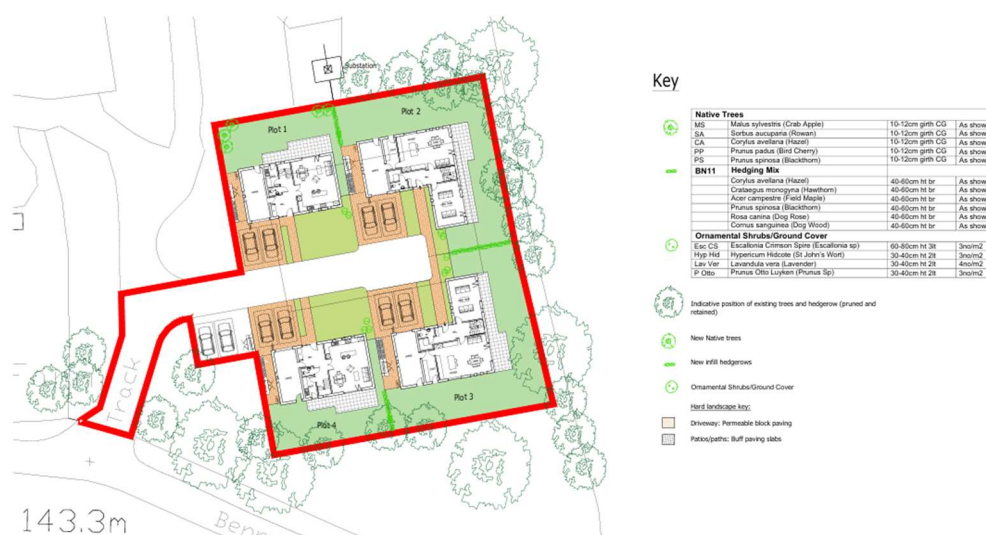


Figure 15 - Proposed Landscape Plan

16. Summary and Conclusions

16.1. The proposal provides four well-designed detached dwellings within the established Southern Green Farmstead, comprising two 2-bedroom and two 3-bedroom homes.

16.2. The scheme builds upon the positive pre-application advice received from North Hertfordshire District Council while refining the proposal through a more clearly defined agricultural courtyard arrangement. The reduced site boundary retains the existing hedgerow, and the revised parking arrangement removes unnecessary hardstanding while retaining two visitor spaces.

16.3. The design responds positively to the rural and historic character of Southern Green through simple agricultural-derived forms, restrained domestic detailing, varied scale and orientation, and an appropriate courtyard relationship.

16.4. The proposal retains the established access, provides appropriate parking and cycle storage, protects neighbouring amenity and provides high-quality residential accommodation.

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16.5. Overall, the proposal represents a sensitive redevelopment of an established farmstead which accords with the principles identified through the pre-application process and the relevant local and national planning policies.

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