

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



DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENT

June 2026

FOR EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS
AT
17 HODWELL, ASHWELL, BALDOCK
HERTFORDSHIRE SG7 5QQ

Prepared by

PAUL HINKINS (Associate)



INTRODUCTION

Client

Mr & Mrs Smyth

17 Hodwell
Ashwell, Baldock
Hertfordshire
SG7 5QQ

Local Authority

North Herts Council

Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

Agent

Inigo Architecture Ltd

81 Station Road
Lower Stondon
Bedfordshire
SG16 6JN

Contact: Paul Hinkins



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 17 Hodwell, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 5QQ.

Our clients, the new owners of the property, propose to extend and modernise the property to provide an improved internal layout, and to enhance the 'kerb appeal' of the house which is in dire need of updating. The property has not been regularly maintained over recent years with some areas falling into a state of disrepair.

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 two storey extensions and alterations to the property, after the removal of a large garage structure to the north-east side of the house.

It is also proposed to make changes to the fenestration utilising an alternative materials palette, and replacement windows and doors throughout the property together with internal alterations to improve circulation and living areas.

Finally, it is proposed to construct a new brick boundary wall around the site, with replacement fences proposed to the southern boundary.

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

Application drawings:

Drawing No. L-01 Rev A	– Existing Ground and First Floor General Arrangement Plans & Elevations. Site Location/Block Plans.
Drawing No. L-02 Rev A	– Proposed Site Development Plan and plan/elevations of proposed potting shed. Elevation of proposed entrance gates and new boundary walls.
Drawing No. L-03 Rev A	– Proposed Ground and First Floor General Arrangement Plans & Elevations.

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).

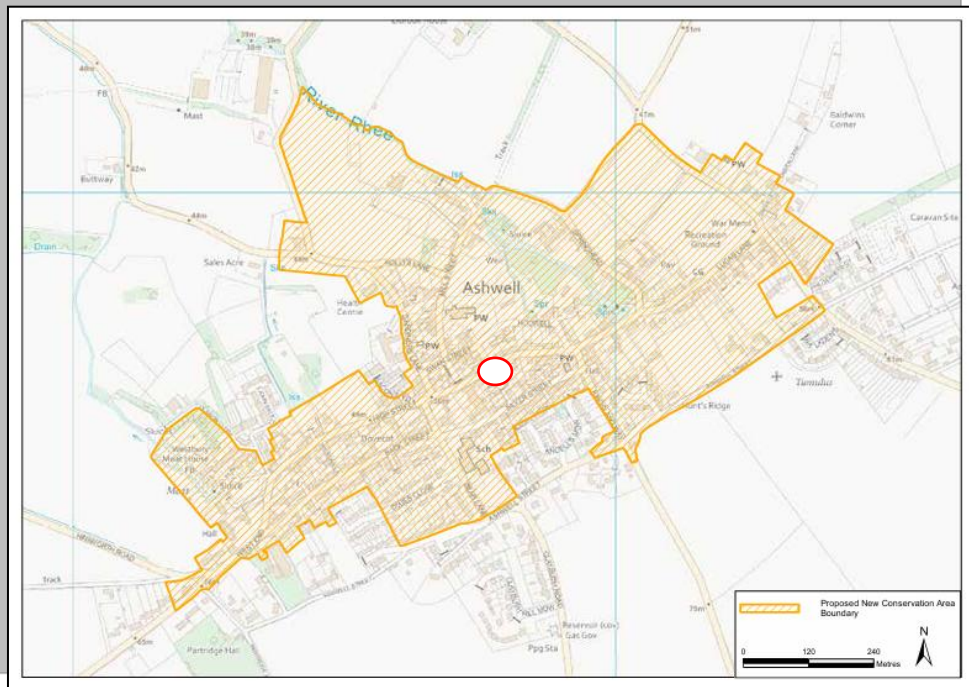
Ashwell is located approximately 5 miles to the north-east of Baldock, and 6.5 to the west of Royston.

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.

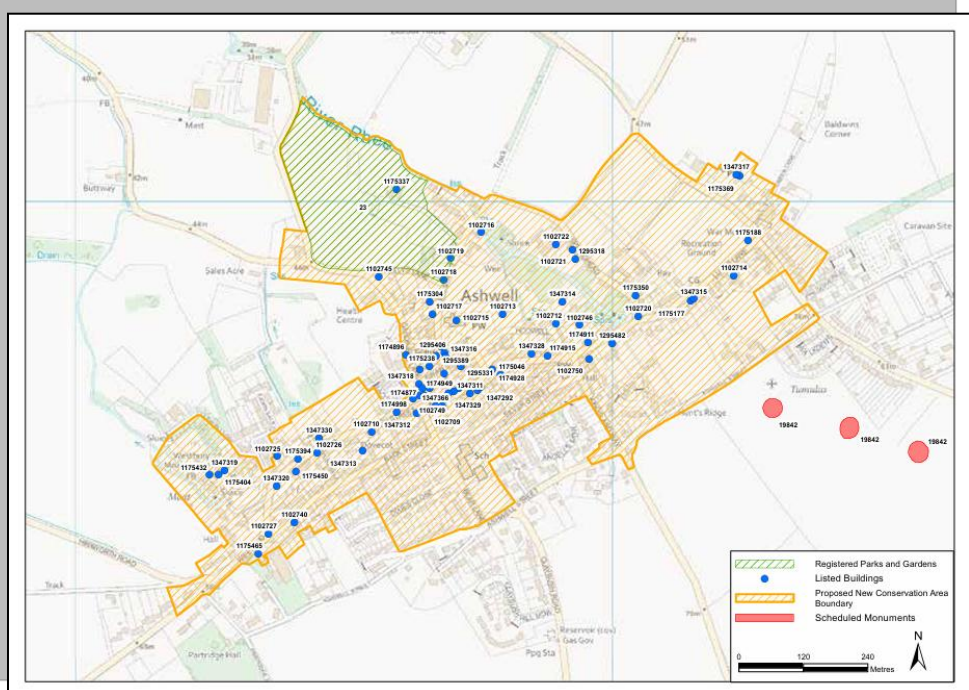
In recent decades, the village has expanded with modern housing extending beyond the Conservation Area boundaries to the south and east in particular.

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 below (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.

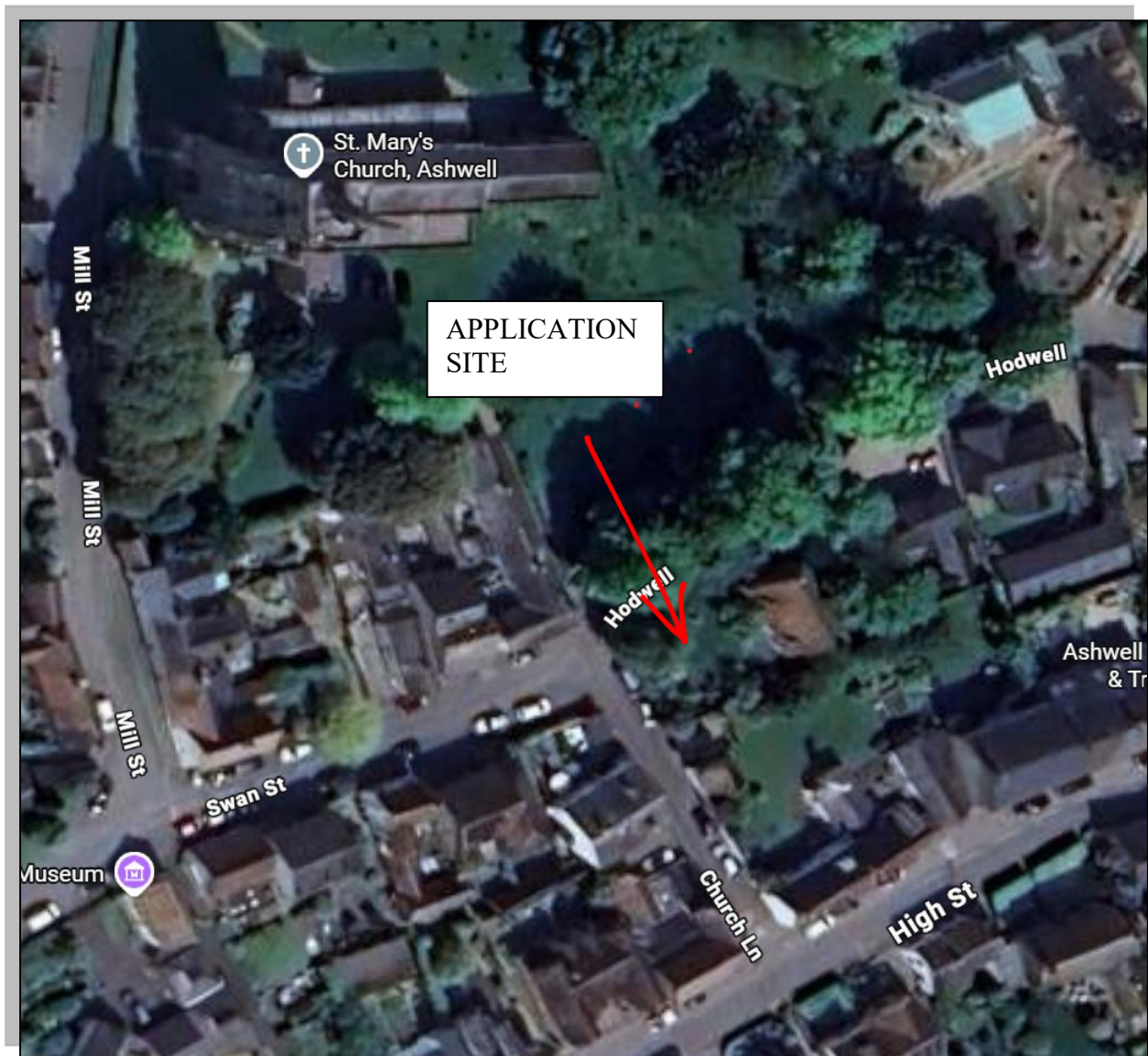


Map illustrating listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and Scheduled Monuments within the Ashwell Conservation Area boundary.

Listed buildings closest to the application site include the Grade I listed Church of St Mary and the Grade II Listed Rectory, both located to the north of the application site.

The Grade II listed Plait Hall is located to the south, and Tower Cottage (Grade II) including attached rear outbuildings to the west of the site along Swan Street.

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): –

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1 – Achieving sustainable development

Policy SP2 – Achieving well-designed places

Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Policy SP13 – Historic Environment

Development Management Policies

Policy D1 – Sustainable design

Policy D2 – House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

Policy D3 – Protecting living conditions

Policy HE1 – Designated heritage assets

Policy HE4 – Archaeology Policy

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.

Other relevant paragraphs of the NPPF

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 – Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Previous Planning History

26/00780/TCA – Tree works – Approved 30/04/2026.

24/01726/TCA – Tree works – Approved 13/09/2024.

21/02287/TCA – Tree works – Approved 06/09/2021.

07/02397/TCA – Tree works – Approved 24/12/2007.

3. Site Analysis

The Application site is accessed off the south side of Hodwell, close to the intersection with Church Lane and Swan Street.

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 visible from the street scene together with the few neighbouring properties along Hodwell, and in addition, the garden is partly visible to the west along Church Lane.

The 'principal elevation' containing the front door faces east with the less prominent side elevation facing the highway (Hodwell). The rear elevation therefore faces west, overlooking the formal garden.

The house currently requires essential maintenance work to prevent water ingress and is generally in a poor state of repair which reflects negatively on the Conservation Area. Recently approved tree works have cleared the site of overgrowing shrubs and reduced heights/lifted canopies of trees on the site to ensure that their life spans are prolonged. The process of bringing the garden and surrounding curtilage back to life can now commence, ensuring that it once again provides a fitting contribution to the setting of the property, the wider street scene and will also further enhance biodiversity.

It is the intention of the new owners to significantly update the host property in terms of extensions, alterations and essential work required to make it habitable to begin with, and a nice property to live in and to view from important vistas outside of the site.

The house is also thermally inefficient with very little insulation present to walls, floors, and roofspaces. Existing windows all require replacing as they are suffering from a lack of maintenance over the years with wood rot present. The glazing does not meet the current 'U' value standards, with significant heat loss through all glazed elements. In addition, a number of glazing panels are either cracked or broken.

A single storey garage/workshop/potting shed with a large footprint area and located on the east side of the property up to the fence boundary is to be demolished, to make way for a two-storey extension which would be the core of the proposed works. This would provide valuable additional residential accommodation for the new owner's needs and requirements, together with a reconfiguration of the existing layout to optimise spatial flow and enhance spatial efficiency.



Photograph indicating the rear (west) elevation of the property



Photograph indicating the north-west corner of the site, at the intersection between Hodwell, Swan Street and Church Lane



*North elevation of the host building facing the street scene (Hodwell).
The garage to be demolished is located to the left of the house*



Photograph indicating the existing vehicular access to the south side of the road



Photograph indicating the front (north-east) corner of the property



Photograph indicating the existing garage/workshop/potting shed to be demolished, and its relationship with the neighbouring property 'Hodwell Barn' to the east. A brick boundary wall between the two properties is to be rebuilt after its collapse.



Prior to planning submission, the Applicants' have discussed the proposals with their neighbour at Hodwell Barn and viewed the application site from next door to ensure that any perceived impact has been full considered within the design process

5. Access

The existing vehicular and pedestrian access off Hodwell is to remain in the same location. Replacement black metal five bar vehicle and pedestrian gates are proposed between new brickwork piers and boundary walls as illustrated on the submitted drawings. The new gate width will be enlarged slightly to improve vehicular access into the site.

The principal front door of the building will be relocated from the east elevation, into the north side of the proposed two-storey extension facing the highway, with an Oak framed storm porch providing protection from the weather.

The floor level of the proposed extension will match the existing house level at ground and first floor levels.

The relocated front door will provide improved access and circulation space into the dwelling.

6. Landscaping

No trees will be removed or detrimentally affected by these proposals, as necessary work has recently been carried out after permission was granted. 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.

A hedge to the northern boundary is to be grubbed up as it has been poorly maintained over the years, causing gaping holes and disfiguration. The hedge has also grown out towards the highway and pushed over the brick wall to the road frontage.



The remaining existing 1.8m high timber fence and posts are to be removed to the west boundary together with the temporary Heras fencing which would have been put in place after fences and posts had previously blown over (See *photograph below*).



An existing 1.5m high brick boundary wall along the east boundary had collapsed over the years, and these bricks have been set aside on the site for possible future re-use.

A new 1.75m high brick boundary wall is therefore proposed along the east boundary which will be rebuilt, and to the extent of the Hodwell and Church Lane boundaries.

Existing 1.8m high timber fences and posts are to be removed to the south boundary as these are in poor condition and leaning towards the property. Replacement fences will be superior 1.8m high close boarded timber fences above a rebuilt retaining wall (due to the difference in ground levels).

High brick walls close to the roadside are a prevalent feature within the immediate area as can be seen in the photographs below.



A new patio area is proposed beyond the west elevation, with additional low-level shrubs to be planted and flower beds dug to correspond with separate landscape designs not included within this application. It is also proposed to construct a traditional but modest brick built potting shed close to the north-west corner of the site. This would have a footprint area of 14 sqm, and overall ridge height of 3.8m. Conservation style rooflights to one roofslope would provide natural light and ventilation into the building together with a single window facing into the site.

External materials would include facing brickwork and white horizontal feather edged timber boarding to match the finished house.

7. Protected Species

There is no evidence of existing bat roosts in the location for the proposed building works or within the limited roof spaces of the property which are easily accessible to inspect. The first-floor ceilings are partially vaulted.

The garage structure to be demolished includes a flat roof with profiled roofing sheets fixed directly to timber joists (see below) and therefore, not conducive to bat roosts.

However, if bats or any other protected species are discovered during the development, works will stop immediately, and Natural England contacted for further advice.



Biodiversity enhancements such as swift boxes and multi-species bird boxes are to be installed on the site after completion of the building works.

Logs and leaf piles will also be available around the garden curtilage.

8. Design Solution

Layout, Scale and Appearance

- 8.1** The proposal is to demolish an existing garage/workshop/potting shed to the east side of the property. This has been constructed with brickwork (painted white externally), under a profiled sheet roof.

The structure has an external footprint area of 46m² and shares an external wall at the abutment with the house.

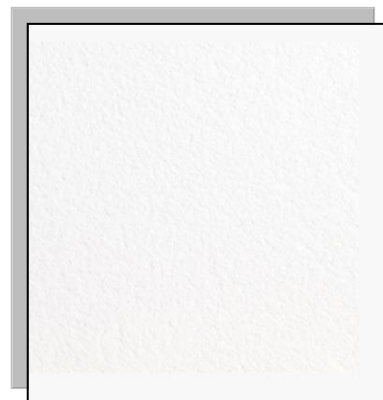
It remains relatively sound in construction, but is nearing the end of its useful life, with some water ingress identified. The garage also sits on a relatively large footprint area; a space better served for additional residential accommodation.

A good level of off-road parking and a turning area within the site will be maintained after the demolition of the existing garage.

- 8.2** The footprint area for the proposed extension would be 70m², although this would also include the removal of part of the rear corner of the house currently incorporating the kitchen and larder.

- 8.3** Generally, all other alterations will be within the envelope of the existing house footprint.

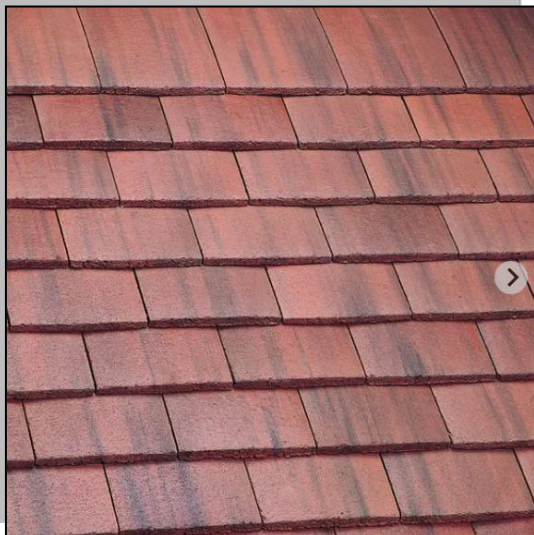
- 8.4** The extension and other alterations indicated have been carefully considered to enhance the external appearance of the property with the introduction of facing brickwork in keeping with the existing, monocouche render (colour: chalk white) as indicated below, and white horizontal feather edged timber boarding (indicated overleaf).





White horizontal feather edged timber boarding

The new roof would be tiled with a plain tile in keeping with the existing. Marley Asmore (Old English Dark Red) plain roofing tiles have therefore been identified.



- 8.5** The external materials palette proposed is prevalent within the Conservation Area, and therefore the host building would continue to sit harmoniously in the street scene and Conservation Area (See photographs below).



- 8.6** All windows and doors are to be replaced with a style that would enhance the property in the Conservation Area. It is therefore proposed to install slimline double glazed colour coated windows and doors.

Thermal performance would also be significantly improved.

9. Conclusion

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

The proposed two-storey extension would be located in the area of the current garage and would extend to a slightly larger footprint area. The proposals would remain proportionate to the overall size and scale of the property and surrounding curtilage, and would remain in keeping from an architectural and aesthetic perspective, with the ridge height of the extension no higher than the current ridge level.

A replacement brick boundary wall is also proposed around the site except for the south boundary which will include the replacement of an existing timber fence and retaining wall below.

In addition, it is considered that the proposals described would not detrimentally affect any neighbouring property (loss of light or views in gardens etc) or the setting of any listed building within close proximity to the site. The Applicant has discussed the project in detail with the nearest neighbour prior to submission of the planning application.

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

- 9.2** All mature trees will be retained on the site, and the formal garden brought back to its former glory. This would be enhanced with rebuilt brick boundary walls.
- 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 alterations would continue to be used in connection with the current residential use.

Inigo Architecture