



Design & Access Statement

Jack Gell Architecture and Design
138c Drakefell Road
London SE4 2DS
07786414992
jackgell.com

12/01/2026

Application Type:
Householder Planning

Heritage context:
Hinxworth
Conservation Area

Site Address:
Land adjacent to
Christy's Yard
Hinxworth
SG7 5EH

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for a revised design of a previously approved bungalow at land adjoining Christy's Yard, Hinxworth.

The proposal follows the grant of planning permission under ref. 24/02404/FP and subsequent pre-application discussions with North Hertfordshire District Council regarding minor revisions to the approved scheme.

The purpose of this statement is to explain the design rationale, demonstrate how the proposal responds to its sensitive historic context, and show how the scheme has evolved positively in direct response to officer and conservation advice.

2. Site Context and Constraints

The application site comprises a small parcel of land accessed from the private road serving Christy's Yard, located within the Hinxworth Conservation Area and within the settlement boundary of Hinxworth.

The site sits adjacent to two Grade II listed buildings, Middle Farmhouse and Cantlebury, and is bounded to the north by a pond and mature landscaping that form an important part of the conservation area character.

Historically, the site formed part of the wider farmyard associated with Middle Farm, and historic mapping demonstrates the long-standing presence of ancillary agricultural buildings in this location. The site is therefore not perceived as an open or undeveloped gap of historic significance, but as a working yard that has evolved over time.

Key constraints influencing the design include:

- Proximity to designated heritage assets;
- Location within a conservation area;
- Sensitivity of views from Chapel Street and across the pond;
- The need for a modest, subservient form of development.

3. Design Evolution & Pre-Application Response

The revised proposal has been developed following detailed consideration of the pre-application response dated 5 January 2026. The design seeks to retain the fundamental principles of the approved scheme while addressing specific

points raised by officers and the Senior Conservation Officer.

Key responses include:

- Retention of a simple single-storey form with the same ridge height and overall scale as the approved dwelling;
- Refinement of proportions to improve the building's balance without increasing visual presence;
- Careful reassessment of fenestration to reinforce the building's ancillary, outbuilding-like character;
- Confirmation of materials that are appropriate to the conservation area and surrounding heritage assets.

The proposal therefore represents an evolution rather than a departure from the approved concept.

4. Design Principles

4.1 Amount and Scale

The proposed dwelling provides 61.5 sqm of internal floor area, meeting the Nationally Described Space Standards for a two-bedroom bungalow. The building remains deliberately modest in scale and subservient to the adjacent listed buildings, ensuring it does not compete visually or spatially within the historic setting.

4.2 Layout

The internal layout has been refined to provide two double bedrooms and a more efficient plan arrangement, supporting long-term occupation while maintaining a compact footprint. Living spaces are arranged to maximise outlook and natural light while minimising visual impact on neighbouring properties.

4.3 Appearance and Heritage Response

The building is intentionally designed to read as a simple traditional outbuilding, reflecting the agricultural history of the site. Key characteristics include:

- A straightforward linear form;
- Limited and carefully controlled openings;
- A restrained architectural language without domestic embellishment.

Fenestration has been reviewed in response to conservation advice:

- A modest opening facing the pond is hidden behind continuous cladding and visually recessive;
- A solid external door is proposed to reinforce the utilitarian character.
- Opening to southern elevation reduced in size.
- Eaves and verge overhang reduced to a typical proportion.

This approach ensures the proposal preserves the setting of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.4 Materials

The material palette reflects traditional local building forms and previously approved materials:

- Handmade clay roof tiles;
- Vertical timber weatherboarding;
- Exposed rafter feet with restrained eaves detailing;
- Light oak-toned timber windows and doors.

These materials are consistent with nearby historic outbuildings and reinforce the proposal's subdued, rural character.

5. Landscape and Setting

Landscaping proposals broadly follow the previously approved scheme and focus on reinforcing the site's rural edge and screening the development from public viewpoints. This includes:

- Retention and reinforcement of existing boundary planting;
- Hedgerow reinstatement to the western boundary;
- Discreet siting of bin and cycle storage away from public views.

The landscape strategy ensures the building remains visually integrated into its setting and does not detract from key views within the conservation area.

6. Access, Parking and Movement

Vehicular access is unchanged from the approved scheme and is taken from the private road serving Christy's Yard. Two on-site parking spaces are provided in accordance with adopted standards, along with secure cycle storage and provision for electric vehicle charging.

Pedestrian access is clear, level and safe, ensuring convenient movement between parking, the dwelling and private amenity space.

7. Sustainability

Although not visually apparent, the dwelling has been designed to achieve very low operational energy use through a highly insulated, airtight envelope and the use of prefabricated natural materials. The construction approach prioritises durability, breathability and reduced embodied carbon, aligning with the Council's declared climate emergency objectives.

8. Access Statement

The proposed bungalow provides step-free access from parking areas to the principal entrance and throughout the dwelling. The internal layout allows for adaptable use over time, supporting inclusive occupation and compliance with relevant accessibility guidance.

9. Conclusion

The revised proposal represents a careful and considered evolution of an already approved scheme. It maintains the modest scale, ancillary character and material palette previously accepted, while refining proportions and internal arrangements to deliver a more sustainable, enduring and higher quality home.

The design has been developed directly in response to pre-application advice and is considered to preserve the setting of adjacent listed buildings, enhance the character of the Hinxworth Conservation Area, and comply with relevant national and local planning policy.