Design & Access and Heritage Statement

ARCHITECTS

Extensions and refurbishment of dwelling and replacement detached garage, including associated external works at

4 Sheep Street, Leighton Bromswold
For
Mr & Mrs Rogers

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This planning statement (incorporating Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement) has been prepared to support a householder planning application within a Conservation Area, for the extension and refurbishment of a dwelling including replacement detached double garage and insertion of 2no rooflights. Additionally various internal remodelling and refurbishment works.

BRIEF

Our client wishes to create a new live-work home that meet their extended family's needs, as well as incorporate environmental aspirations. The brief is to extend the property to create a modern open plan kitchen and family space, with Utility Room and a flexible room that can be used for a Guest Bedroom or home office or Play room. Additionally internal remodelling to provide better sanitary accommodation and occupation of the large roof space to provide better storage provision. Externally replace the existing 1960's prefabricated concrete garage with a permanent and more aesthetically pleasing structure.

The extension and outbuilding are to respond sensitively and yet positively to the site's biodiversity and wider vernacular

Key environmental requirements of the brief include: low future energy costs, air-tight construction, natural day-lighting and other passive design measures. Complete overhaul of the heating and hot water systems, including Air source heat pump and photovoltaic panels

The applicants appointed independent surveyors during their purchase of the property:

- Gowers Surveyors – Tailored Historic Building Survey and Valuation. Undertaken 25/01/2024
  This report was based on a visual inspection only with no opening up or exploratory works carried out within the property
- Gateley Smithers Purslow – Structural Appraisal ref 240957/TD Undertaken 03/04/2024 following findings of the Gowers Report, in particular structural observations.
  This report was based on a visual inspection only with no opening up or exploratory works carried out within the property

The above reports highlighted several issues with the property, all fixable but substantial in terms of costs time. Several of these issues are included within this application to avoid any confusion over whether works require planning permission or not.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 Location

The site at The Old Vicarage is situated east of the village of Leighton Bromswold. The site measures 0.64acres on a slightly sloping site.
Address:
The Old Vicarage, 4 Sheep Street, Leighton Bromswold, Huntingdon. PE28 5AY

2.2 The Site

The application site is located at the eastern end of the village, within a conservation area, and is surrounded on 3 sides by listed buildings. Details of the listed buildings can be found in item 5 of this Statement.

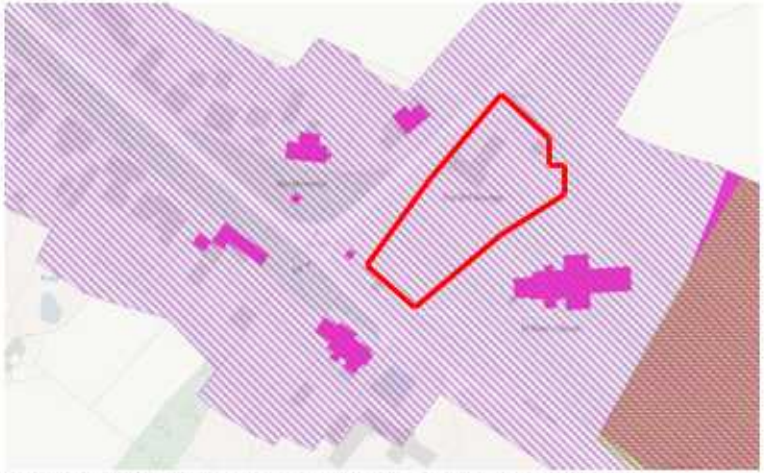
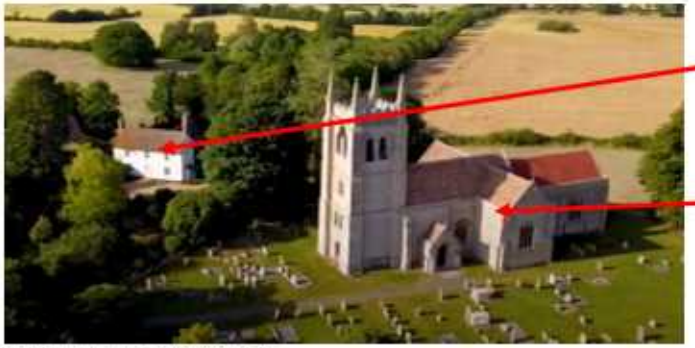


Image taken from Huntingdonshire Council interactive policies map
Conservation area shown hatched pink. Listed Buildings solid shaded pink

The application site, outlined in red, is well screened along most boundaries by existing tall trees and dense hedgerows, all of which will be retained. The building site is elevated approximately 2 metres above the road level and falls towards the north boundary.



Aerial view from North East



Aerial view from South West

There are two vehicular access points off Sheep Street to the north and south of the house. The north access leads to a large gravelled driveway area, and is used by the applicants as the main vehicular access to the site. The south access leads to a gravelled driveway which extends into the site to a detached prefabricated garage constructed of circa 1960s concrete panelling and corrugated sheet roofing.

It is understood that the property has a covenant on it to maintain the stone walls which border the churchyard.

VIEWS INTO SITE



Site North west boundary from Sheep Street



Site South east boundary from churchyard to site



Site South east boundary from churchyard to site



Site South east boundary from churchyard to site

VIEWS OUT OF SITE



Site South east boundary from site to church



Site South east boundary from site to church [2]



Site South east boundary from site to churchyard



Site North east boundary from site

2.3 Flood Risk

Using the Gov.uk website – Flooding map for planning, the site is noted as being in Flood Zone 1:

> Land within flood zone 1 has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

2.4 Existing building

The property sits centrally along the North West boundary adjacent to Sheep Street and has a gravelled drive with two gated entrances, both of which sweep around the house down to a detached garage. Mature gardens extend to each side of the house. There are formal lawns, an orchard, a large terrace, and a vegetable garden. The total plot extends to 0.64 acres and is enclosed by a stone wall to the South East boundary, beyond which is the Grade I listed parish church.

The property is an attractive four-bedroom, two storey, period house, with Georgian origins, thought to date from around 1800. It is believed that the property was extended in the circa 1860 to the north, doubling the size of the house at the time.

The original dwelling runs in a generally east to west orientation, with its gable end fronting Sheep Street. The principal entrance is orientated to the south, and is a handsome, formal facade consisting of 5no large sash windows and a central door, all set within a rendered façade, and below a duo pitched roof clad with clay tiles. The property benefits from a cellar located below a third of the ground floor.

The north element is similar in form and scale to the original, a linear form running north to south, fronting Sheep Street, thus creating a T shaped plan. The form of windows and doors are akin to the era of the works, with small casement type windows and double doors. A door was added at the junction of the existing building, with a footpath that runs to Sheep Street boundary, and a gate set within a brickwork wall. This door access is not used, and is redundant. The walls are facing brickwork which contrasts with the rendered section of the house. The roof is duo-pitched covered in the same roof tiles as the south element.

Further to the north is a timber framed conservatory that has a lean-to roof, attached to the gable end. Due to site parameters the floor level of the conservatory is circa 400mm lower than the internal house level. A simple, single storey, lean to, outbuilding has been added to the South East gable end of the original property, appearing to be used as a Garden Store / Potting shed. This is constructed in brickwork with corrugated sheet roofing over.

Internally the rooms have the proportions one would expect from a house of this period and are beautifully light, with large windows over-looking the formal gardens. The ceilings are a good height, adding to the feeling of space.

The property also benefits from a single storey, detached double garage, located in the North East portion of the site. It is unknown when this garage was erected. It is constructed using a proprietary concrete panelling system which has a coarse surface finish of stone chippings. It is covered with a simple duo-pitched roof with profiled cladding sheets, assumed to be asbestos. Directly adjacent to the garage is a timber shed. Both the garage and shed sit on a concrete raft foundation.

The dwelling benefits from a private drainage system, consisting of a septic tank located in the mature rear garden to the South East of the dwelling

The property has an oil-fired central heating system with a floor-mounted boiler in the utility room. There is a steel oil tank positioned externally to the front of the property, adjacent the north west boundary beyond the front parking area.



South west elevation



North East Elevation



South east elevation



North East Elevation (to Sheep Street)



North East Elevation (to Sheep Street)



Outbuilding to South East gable end



North East Elevation of rear element (to Sheep Street)



Detached Garage and Shed – rear (SE elevation)



Detached Garage and Shed – front (NW elevation)



View to site from footpath to the NE of the site)



View to North east elevation from Sheep Street

3.0 POLICIES

3.1 Planning History

There have been historic applications associated with the property. The following information has been taken from Huntingdonshire Public Access facility:

T1 Elm: Prune whole crown back to previous pruning points. T2) Sequoia: Reduce the lateral branches to balance the tree
Ref. No: 16/02135/TRCA

Remove: T1 - Elm T4 - Juniper TG1 - Mixed coniferous group Reason - T1 - High health and safety risk - T4 & TG1 - Clay shrinkage subsidence damage
Ref. No: 18/00749/TRCA

3.2 Planning Policy

The planning policies considered to be relevant to this application are noted below:

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019):

- LP 11 Design Context
- LP 12 Design Implementation
- LP 14 Amenity
- LP 31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP34 Heritage Assets and their Settings

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):

- 3.1 Place Making Principles
- 3.7 Building Form

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022

Other Material Considerations

Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area Character Statement March 1994

General
A proposal within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents. A proposal should:

- minimise negative impact on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape through retention of buildings/ groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and land form
- retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, scale, massing, form, materials, and plot widths of the existing built environment; as well as retaining architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area
- where relevant and practical, remove features that are incompatible with or detract significantly from the conservation area.

4.0 DESIGN & ACCESS

4.1 General

During the design development, and since their purchase of the property, the applicants have actively liaised with their immediate neighbours and the parish council over works to the property as well as its external spaces, including trees, prior to formalising and submitting this planning application.

The applicant's intention is to address findings of the respective reports to bring the property up to a modern standard of living and to ensure the ongoing longevity of the building for the years to come. The applicants recognise the importance of the building and its surroundings, including the village conservation area and the buildings setting relative to the historic elements of the village. The proposals have been considered at all stages to respect and enhance both the building and its surroundings, using sympathetic form, aesthetics, and materials.

4.2 Layout, Access & Scale

Access

The access to the site remains as existing – the principal driveway to the south of the building and a secondary vehicular entrance to the north of the building. The secondary access point is predominantly for maintenance vehicles and is very tight with vehicles having knocked the post on several occasions. The existing gates are in a poor condition both structurally and aesthetically. The intention is to slightly widen the access, removing a small section of the existing hedge, and inserting a set of sturdy timber gates. The gates will match the style and design of those to the main driveway to provide consistency on the street scene.

A former pedestrian access gate that is located on the front boundary, and provided access to a former (redundant) door, shall be removed and the opening closed with brickwork to match the existing.



Timber gate to main driveway

Although there would be no immediate demand for additional vehicular parking on site, the existing driveways are able to accommodate more than 10no vehicles at any one time, with further vehicles within the garage structure.

Layout

The proposed single storey extension is to be positioned at the rear of the building, which is not visible from the main frontage of the site, bar glimpsed views over / through boundary hedging along the north west boundary. However, it is acknowledged that the extension would be seen from the graveyard of the church, which is accessible to the public. As a result, sympathetic aesthetic / material choices have been made – see below.

The extension extends over a current patio area, and extends virtually the full width of the rear of the Victorian element. It has been set in from the gable end by 125mm to clearly define the new from the old. An additional section has been added on the gable end of the Georgian element of the property, following demolition of the lean-to store

Ground Floor
The existing rear wall is to be removed to allow an open plan kitchen and Family space to be create, off which is a Garden Room / Bedroom for Guests, and a Utility Room and Toilet. Internally the floor level of the kitchen will be raised to allow level access through to the extension. At the north west end of the building the existing utility room and toilet shall be converted to provide a walk-in wardrobe area off the new Bedroom and an Ensuite facility. Access in to the Conservatory shall remain as existing.

First Floor
Three rooms shall be remodelled to create a large Master Bedroom Ensuite and Family Bathroom

Occupation of the roof
The intention is to occupy the front section of the roof, to provide more accessible and convenient space for storage purposes only – it will not be to habitable standards.
The roof is of a traditional timber-framed construction, with cut timber rafters forming the diagonal slopes of the roof. These are supported at eaves level by the front and rear walls of this structure and midspan support to these rafters is provided by traditional horizontal timber purlins. The purlins span from the gable ends and seven horizontal timber collar beams, with vertical struts to ceiling level. The report by Gowers noted there is evidence of some rainwater ingress through defective roof coverings and especially through the chimney stacks. No ventilation exists and the roof has an impermeable sarking felt, suggesting re-roofing around 40-50 years ago, exacerbating moisture in the loft, which has led to the proposal for reroofing – see below

Externally
The proposed single storey garage will be in the same location as the existing, providing a large structure for occupation of two vehicles and space for storage.

4.3 Appearance

The design intent is for the new elements to be clearly distinguishable from the existing, using a modern design approach, whilst bringing together the building using similar materials.

Works to Dwelling
The rear extension is to be single storey in height and simplistic in its form, to acknowledge the building parameters, particularly the first-floor windows. A flat roof is to be constructed over the extension, and a large roof lantern is to be installed centrally to the main space, to provide natural light into the heart of the new extension as well as the existing kitchen area. The external walls are continued up to create a parapet that wraps around the flat roof, creating clean lines.

The external walls are to be formed in reclaimed handmade bricks which provide a softened aesthetic. The expanse of brickwork is broken up with openings for glazed folding sliding doors, a set of double doors and a single door and window. These allow daylight into the new extension whilst allowing access out on to the remodelled patio at the rear. Brickwork soldier course detailing is included to the top of the parapet and above window opening, adding detail like that of the existing building.

The existing entrance is understated, with a small door and minimal timber surround. The proposal is to remove the timber surround and replace with a simple, Georgian style stone portico and entrance steps to produce a regal and suitably grand entrance to the property, whilst respecting the original Georgian aesthetic.

Re-roofing
The roofs are covered with traditional clay tiles along with matching rounded ridge tiles, and valley tiles. Internally it has an impermeable sarking felt, suggesting re-roofing around 40-50 years ago. Several tiles are broken and other have slipped, throughout the roof coverings. The sarking felt is not properly dressed in to the guttering at eaves level and there are signs of

perishing in several locations with daylight observed. All the above are contributing to water ingress within the roof structure.
The applicant intends to reroof the entire roof structure, including a new breather membrane and heritage tiles of the similar form and colour as the existing, by TBS. This will allow repairs to be undertaken and provide a roof covering that will last for a further 40-50 years. The proposal is to also insert 2no rooflights to the North East elevation of the front roof section, where occupying the roof space as noted above. These will be seen from the public highway, although they will be minor in regards to the expanse of the roof, with minimal impact. However, the applicant recognises the importance of aesthetics and to respect the conservation area. The rooflights shall be conservation type windows – as per the image below


Conservation rooflight


Cast iron effect rainwater goods

Replacement rainwater goods
The roofs discharge rainwater into conventional rainwater gutters and downpipes. In some areas these are of a traditional cast iron construction although most of the fittings have been replaced with PVC gutters and downpipes. In several cases the cast iron is split, and cracked. In several areas the guttering is not collecting rainwater leading to water onto the brickwork below. Some downpipes discharge directly on to the ground which is causing damage.
The proposal is to remove and reinstate new rainwater goods throughout – guttering and downpipes. The applicant recognises the importance of aesthetics and to respect the conservation area. New PVCu cast iron effect rainwater goods will be adopted throughout, in black. See image above

Repairs to chimneys
The property is served by three separate brick-built chimneys. These are built into the left- and right-hand gable walls of the Georgian front structure with the third rising through the centre of the rear addition. The report noted water ingress to all the chimneys due to cracks, spalling of brickwork, etc. Pots were loose.
The proposal is for the chimneys to be more closely inspected once the scaffold has been erected and the remedial repair works shall become more evident. The proposal is to repair like for like

Replacement of windows
The windows to the front elevation of the Georgian front structure are traditional single-glazed vertically sliding sash windows in timber casements and the other windows are more conventional hinged casements, being a mixture of single-glazed and double-glazed units. All the sash windows have rot and damage to their frames.
The proposal is to remove all the single glazed windows and replace with more thermally efficient double-glazed units, as previously undertaken to several windows in the property. This will then provide continuity of design whilst providing better thermal parameters. The sash windows to the Georgian elements shall be removed entirely and replaced with heritage style PVCu type sash windows to similar designs.

Works to the Outbuilding
The garage/outbuilding shall be single storey with a duo pitched roof spanning from east to west. The reason for this form is to take advantage of the progression of the sun across the site, during the day -see item 4.6 below.

The building will be seen from the public highway, through the gates to the secondary driveway. Its form and aesthetic take cues from the existing building, and shall be a significant enhancement to that provided by the current garage, thus enhancing the conservation area.
The walls shall be formed in masonry, clad with a render system, coloured of white, and the roof shall be covered in flat roof tiles. The pitch of the roof is reduced to the minimum to reduce the visual impact of the building.

4.4 Landscaping

The applicant acknowledges that the gardens are intrinsic to the enjoyment and aesthetic of the building. They are intending to enhance the landscaping throughout the site, whilst at the same time addressing privacy and maintenance.They have already started reinforcing the boundaries of the site incorporating various planting to the south east and south west boundaries.

The proposal includes for a patio area off the new extension, to allow the applicants enjoyment of the external gardens close to their property. The patio shall be formed of paving slabs, the edge of which will be softened with planting

4.5 Ecology

The proposed works are not considered to adversely impact upon the ecological status or overall biodiversity of the site. Conversely due to the proposed planting works the ecology will be enhanced. There will be a small amount of previous gravel driveway lost to the development, but this is not considered to be detrimental to the site.

The proposal includes for the removal of a proprietary concrete framed garage, and a general purpose off the shelf timber shed, neither of which are considered to have any potential to house protected species. Nonetheless, removal of these structures will be carried out by hand and with care.

The roof space does not show any signs of protected species such as bats

4.6 Energy Efficiency / Sustainability

The applicant is very keen to install sustainable systems throughout the property to create a thermally efficient property at completion. Part of this process does include for replacement of existing thermal elements. As noted above these elements, in particular windows, doors, and roof, shall be sympathetically upgraded and respect the current aesthetic.

The applicant has already met with specialist companies in regards to sustainable systems to be installed, but also recognise that these systems do have aesthetic implications, and therefore their locations have been carefully considered to minimise impact:

The existing cellar shall be altered to a centralised Plant room with mechanical and electrical system being installed.

Air source heat pumps shall be installed directly above the basement opening, located adjacent the Living room rear window and the former door to the kitchen. This location is at the front of the building, but they will be shielded from view from the public highway by the existing boundary wall, which is circa 4m away, and softened by heavy planting. An existing gate shall be removed and the opening blocked up with matching brickwork. The existing door has not been used for some years and will continue to be unused. The units will not be visible from the public highway.

As noted in section 4.3 the garage / outbuilding will have a duo pitched roof which will span in an east to west direction. These roof slopes will be covered with PV panels to gain solar gain from the sun. As noted, the building will be visible from the public highway, albeit glimpsed. However, the roof pitch is shallow and the number of panels is 6no, so it is proposed the works are not detrimental to the conservation area.

5.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The village of Leighton Bromswold lies astride a prominent ridge to the north of Ellington Brook, 8 miles to the west of Huntingdon. The village possesses a linear layout with dwellings on both sides of The Avenue which runs from the North East to the south West, with the road came changing to Church Lane beyond the junction to Sheep Street which heads of to the North east and surrounding villages. Approximately half way along The Avenue is Staunch Hill that runs in a south west direction linking to the A14. The parish church is located at the east end of The Avenue. At the eastern end of The Avenue is a grassed public area, which includes the siting of a War memorial. It is suggested that this end of the village is the original core of the village with expansion taking place along The Avenue to the North West. The village has a Conservation Area Character Statement, adopted March 1994

The application site is located at the eastern end of the Avenue and is surrounded on 3 sides by listed buildings.



Image taken from historic England Website
Icons note the listed buildings. Site noted with a red arrow

To the north west, across Sheep Street:

THE PIGHTLE, 3, SHEEP STREET, LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD

- Grade: II
- List Entry Number: 1222935
  Cottage. Late C17 or C18 and C20 renovation. Timber-framed and plastered. Ridge pantiled roof with local gault brick ridge stack. Two storeys, lobby entry plan. C20 porched entrance. Two first floor and two ground floor casement windows.

To the south east

HUNDRED STONE CIRCA 10 METRES TO NORTH-WEST OF GATEWAY TO CHURCHYARD OF CHURCH OF ST MARY, CHURCH LANE, LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD

- Grade: II
- List Entry Number: 1130113
  Hundred stone, large monolith of limestone roughly squared mounted on pavement of four limestone slabs. The stone, discovered recently, is thought to be the hundred stone of Leightonstone hundred.



To the west / South west, bordering the boundary:
PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, CHURCH LANE, LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD

- Grade: I
- List Entry Number: 1222905

St Mary's is a Grade One listed building and was first built in 1248 and extended in 1310 into a traditional two isle, two transept village church. The church was rebuilt in 1632, and the tower added in 1634-1641
The church is one of a group of seven rural churches known as the West Leightonstone Benefice, part of the Diocese of Ely



The application site
Views into the site from within the Conservation Area are varied. The host dwelling consumes circa 30% of the available street frontage onto Sheep Street, with the remaining 70% consumed by heavy vegetation (trees and shrubs) which is punctured by the two access driveways. As a result, views from this frontage are restricted and glimpsed.

The extensive garden extends to the south west and south east, where it meets the perimeter of the parish church graveyard. The southern most boundary has a low-level stone wall, where views into the site are easily made. Although the property is heavily shielded from public view by the planting in the garden



South most boundary



SE boundary – building in background

The south east boundary consists of a low-level stone wall running its entire length, separating the site from the churchyard. A covenant in the deeds of the property notes that this wall must be maintained by the owner. Along its length there is heavily vegetation which again provides restricted views to the application site. It is not until one goes into the farthest most corner of the churchyard, to the North east, where one has a more complete view of the property. However, due to topography and planting the view continues to be glimpsed.



View to SE boundary



View to SE boundary from church NE corner

To the north of the site, beyond a vehicular access which provides access to fields and the rear of the churchyard, is a PROW footpath that runs from

Sheep Street across the fields, heading to the north east. Due to heavy vegetation the building is only glimpsed



View from PROW to site

As previously identified, and as illustrated within the drawing package and photographs above, views of the proposed extension and replacement garage from outside of the application site will be minimal, bar from the churchyard. The applicant acknowledges the important relationship between the church and their dwelling and its impact on the setting of the church, whilst also considering privacy and ecological enhancement.

The location, scale and appearance of the proposed extension and garage have all been carefully considered in order to mitigate any perceived adverse impact on the conservation area

The scale, form, and appearance are considered to be sympathetic to the local vernacular, to the Conservation Area as a whole, and have minimal impact on the grade I listed church. It is not considered that the resultant development from this application would be detrimental to the overall heritage asset.

The proposed extension is to be located at the rear of the property, thus not affecting the principal street scene. The proposed structure will not compete with the host dwelling, by virtue of its subservient scale and appearance. The proposed structure will also not obscure any views of a heritage asset from wider public views due to its discrete positioning, and thus any perceived level of 'harm' caused by the proposal would be minimal. The materials have been chosen to respect the glimpsed views from the churchyard, with material chosen from the local vernacular.

The replacement garage occupies a similar position and footprint as the existing. The design is a vast improvement on the crude precast concrete and asbestos roof structure

The other works to the property are cosmetic, but respect the character of the property and the conservation Area. New / replacement materials shall be of heritage design and standard

6.0 CONCLUSION

We believe that the scheme proposed strikes the right balance between a small impact on the church, enhancement of the conservation area, and the natural development of the property to provide modern accommodation.

We feel that this statement and supporting information justify the proposal which enhances the existing building and compliments the adjacent grade 1 listed church and Conservation Area.

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