

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Land to the rear of Manor Farm, Wood Lane, Norton Juxta Twycross

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for:

Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and the erection of 4 custom build dwellings with associated access, landscaping and infrastructure

The statement explains the design principles and access strategy that have informed the proposed development, and demonstrates how the scheme responds to the pre-application advice issued by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (ref: 25/10134/PREHMO, January 2026).

2. Site Context

The site comprises agricultural land and buildings located to the rear of existing frontage development along Wood Lane, on the eastern edge of the rural hamlet of Norton Juxta Twycross. The site is located within Landscape Character Area H — Twycross Open Farmland.

Key characteristics of the site include:

- an existing warehouse and barn complex with associated hardstanding in generally poor condition
- established boundary hedgerows and trees providing a clear degree of containment
- limited wider visibility from public vantage points
- an existing vehicular access onto Wood Lane
- proximity to neighbouring industrial uses to the east, noted as an acoustic constraint

The adjacent development at Manor Farm (ref: 20/01250/FUL) provides a direct design precedent — a courtyard arrangement of sensitively converted and newly constructed rural buildings using red brick and traditional materials, set around a shared yard. This provides both a design reference and evidence of the acceptability of residential development in this immediate context.

3. Design Concept

The design approach is based on the creation of a small rural courtyard development, inspired by traditional farmstead arrangements and the established character of the adjacent completed scheme.

Key design principles include:

- buildings arranged around a shared informal courtyard space
- simple, functional building forms with pitched roof forms
- informal layout reflecting rural character and avoiding suburban estate geometry
- retention and reinforcement of boundary hedgerows and vegetation
- use of a restrained, locally appropriate material palette

The design directly responds to the character of Norton Juxta Twycross, where the established built form comprises predominantly detached dwellings with generous plots, traditional pitched roofs, and materials including red brick, natural stone and render. Gable fronts are a prominent local architectural feature.

4. Scale and Massing

The scale of the proposed dwellings has been carefully considered having regard to the pre-application advice, which noted the importance of respecting the rural context and suggested that lower eaves heights and rooms in the roof would be more appropriate than standard two-storey construction in this open countryside location.

The proposed dwellings are designed with:

- lower eaves heights to reduce apparent mass and bulk
- pitched roofs with accommodation within the roof form, avoiding full two-storey elevations where possible
- simple, well-proportioned forms broken into domestic elements to reflect agricultural building forms
- massing consistent with surrounding built form and the adjacent completed development

Ridge and eaves heights are shown on the submitted elevation drawings and have been kept modest and in keeping with the scale of the immediate area. This approach ensures the dwellings sit comfortably within the landscape and do not appear as dominant or incongruous structures in this rural setting.

5. Appearance and Materials

The architectural approach is intentionally simple and rural in character, drawing on the Gopsall estate vernacular identified in the pre-application design guidance for this character area.

The material palette includes:

- ironstone or natural stone walling — responding to the local vernacular and Gopsall estate character
- clay plain roof tiles — traditional and appropriate to the rural setting
- timber or aluminium windows and doors — well-proportioned openings with traditional casement detailing
- gable fronts as a prominent architectural feature — reflecting the local character analysis

This restrained and cohesive palette ensures a high-quality appearance that integrates effectively with the rural setting and the established character of the immediate area. As set out in the Custom Build Statement, the external envelope and material palette are fixed by the planning permission and will not be varied at purchaser level. This is integral to the developer-led delivery model and ensures design quality and coherence across the development.

6. Layout

The layout has been carefully considered to create a cohesive courtyard arrangement, with buildings positioned to define the shared space and create a sense of place consistent with a traditional rural farmstead.

Key layout principles include:

- buildings arranged to form a coherent courtyard rather than a linear estate road arrangement

- clear access and circulation routes through the shared courtyard surface
- adequate parking and turning provided for all plots
- retention and respect of existing boundary vegetation
- generous plot sizes of 661–673 sq m per dwelling
- a minimum 21m back-to-back distance between habitable room windows, in accordance with the pre-application advice

The layout avoids rigid or overly regular geometry, instead adopting a more organic and informal arrangement consistent with traditional rural yards. This directly responds to the pre-application officer comment that the earlier layout felt 'forced/regular and inauthentic', and that a more organic feel would be more appropriate given the context.

7. Refuse and Servicing — Plot 4

The pre-application response specifically raised concern about the distance of Plot 4 from Wood Lane and the implications for refuse collection. This has been addressed as follows:

Plot 4 is located to the south of the main courtyard group. The following measures ensure that refuse collection is adequately provided for:

- a designated bin storage area is provided within the Plot 4 curtilage, in accordance with the design principles set out in the pre-application document
- a designated bin collection point is provided at the central turning head within the site, accessible to all four dwellings on collection day
- the internal courtyard and central turning head provide adequate space for an 11.2m refuse collection vehicle and an 8.2m fire tender to access, collect bins directly and exit in forward gear, as demonstrated in the Transport Note swept path analysis
- the refuse vehicle is not required to reverse

The refuse strategy has been developed in consultation with the Transport Note and is shown on the submitted drawings. The Council's waste team will be consulted as part of the application.

8. Access and Movement

Vehicular access is taken from the existing access onto Wood Lane. The access has been designed in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG), including:

- an access width of approximately 4.3m for a minimum of 5m behind the highway boundary, with 0.5m strips each side, in accordance with the 4.25m minimum required by Table 13 of the LHDG
- vehicular visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in accordance with Table 6 of the LHDG, within land under the applicant's control or the public highway
- 1m x 1m pedestrian visibility splays on each side of the access
- hard-bound surface for a minimum of 5m from the highway boundary with drainage to prevent surface water discharge

The internal access road and courtyard have a width of approximately 4.8m, exceeding the 3.7m minimum required by the LHDG and the pre-application response for emergency vehicle access beyond the initial 45m. The courtyard operates as a shared surface environment using tegula block paving, reducing the need for formal road infrastructure and reinforcing the rural character of the development. A central turning head provides space for refuse and emergency vehicles to access, collect or attend, and exit in forward gear without reversing. Swept path analysis in the Transport Note confirms that an 11.2m refuse vehicle and an 8.2m fire tender can access and manoeuvre to serve all plots.

As the proposed dwellings are situated more than 45m from the public highway, the access has been designed to accommodate emergency vehicles in accordance with the pre-application requirement and BS5906:2005.

Parking is provided at a minimum of three spaces per dwelling in accordance with Table 28 of the LHDG. Garage dimensions meet the minimum 6m x 3m single and 6m x 6m double garage standards. Each dwelling is provided with a dedicated active electric vehicle charging point, with passive provision for future additional points. EV charging locations are indicated on the submitted site plan.

Given the scale of the development, the LHA confirmed at pre-application stage that the site will remain a private road and will not be considered for adoption. The site will be privately maintained by a management company funded by the owners of the four dwellings.

9. Landscaping

The landscape strategy plays a key role in integrating the development into its rural setting. It includes:

- retention of all existing boundary hedgerows and established trees that can practicably be retained
- introduction of new native planting to reinforce and strengthen the rural setting
- soft landscape edges to the development, avoiding hard formal boundaries
- informal treatment of the courtyard and shared surfaces using permeable materials
- a wildflower meadow and orchard planting in the southern portion of the site, supporting biodiversity
- private garden areas provided to each dwelling with minimum 11m garden depths

The development necessitates the removal of 10 arboricultural features including 6 Category B trees and Group G1, representing a moderate to high magnitude arboricultural impact as confirmed by the AIA. This will be addressed through a comprehensive compensatory planting strategy secured by condition, prioritising native species, boundary screening and replacement canopy. A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan will be submitted to the LPA prior to commencement. Retention of T6 on the eastern boundary is conditional upon earthworks confirmation through the AMS process.

10. Custom Build Approach

The development will be delivered as developer-led custom build dwellings. The submitted design establishes a clear and fixed architectural framework — including layout, scale and massing, and external appearance — which is not indicative.

Purchaser input is primarily focused on the internal layout, specification and finish of each dwelling. Within the fixed architectural framework, purchasers will be able to influence:

- internal layout and room configuration
- internal specification including kitchens, bathrooms, and finishes
- limited plot-specific elements such as hard landscape details within the approved framework

Customisation remains possible after construction has commenced, but the scope of customisation reduces progressively as the project moves forward and relevant works are completed. The earlier a purchaser engages, the broader the scope for input across all elements.

The external envelope, materials, fenestration and roof design are fixed by the planning permission. This is integral to the developer-led delivery model, which requires the shell to be constructed to a fixed external design in order to maintain the build programme and ensure design quality across the development.

Marketing to registered custom build purchasers will commence immediately upon grant of planning permission. Full details of the delivery model are set out in the accompanying Custom Build Statement.

11. Conclusion

The proposal represents a carefully considered design response that:

- reflects the character of traditional rural farmstead development in Norton Juxta Twycross
- responds directly to the pre-application design advice, including on scale, massing, layout character, and refuse strategy
- uses a high-quality, locally appropriate material palette rooted in the Gopsall estate vernacular
- provides a significant visual enhancement over the existing agricultural buildings
- creates a high-quality residential environment within a coherent design framework
- delivers custom build housing through a developer-led model with immediate marketing upon planning consent

The scheme is therefore considered to be appropriate and acceptable in design and access terms.