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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

40-44 HIGH STREET
NORTHWOOD
HA6 1BN

Erection of 2 New Houses, 2 Ground Floor One Bedroom Flats, and 1 Three-Bedroom Flat,
all with Garden Access and Parking

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1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) supports a full planning application for the redevelopment of 40–44 High Street, Northwood. The proposal replaces the existing commercial building with a high-quality residential development comprising two new houses, two ground floor studio flats, and one three-bedroom flat, each with private garden access and parking provision.

The scheme revitalises an underutilised site to the rear of Northwood High Street, introducing a contemporary architectural language that respects the area's heritage while providing modern, sustainable homes.

2 Site Context and Existing Use

The application site currently contains a single-storey commercial building of approximately 263m², formerly used as an accountancy office. The building is notable for its unusually generous height of 3.59 metres.

The site is accessed from Northwood High Street via two pedestrian and vehicular entrances and includes existing parking for eight vehicles.

To the rear, the site backs onto mature tree-lined gardens of properties along Hilliard Road, over 50 metres distant, maintaining privacy and a green outlook. Surrounding buildings include shops with flats above, set at a distance that prevents direct overlooking.

Given changing commercial demands and local housing needs, office use is no longer viable, and redevelopment presents an opportunity to deliver suitable residential accommodation in this location.

3 Proposed Development

The scheme proposes five residential units arranged to maximise daylight, privacy, and accessibility:

- Two 2-bedroom duplex houses, with private entrances, gardens, and dedicated parking.
- Two ground floor studio flats designed for compact yet accessible living.
- One spacious three-bedroom flat with direct access to a rooftop garden.

The layout optimises the site's depth and access points while prioritising sustainable design principles and strong indoor–outdoor connections.

Sections show a floor-to-ceiling height of 2.5m on each level. The upstairs flats where the levels change have far exceeded space standards.

Materials include cedar cladding, which features operable panels across the window openings; zinc cladding (colour to be specified); an Enviromat green roof; aluminium cladding to the roof decks; and red facing brickwork to match the adjacent shopfronts.

4 Design Approach

4.1 Architectural Language

The design adopts a contemporary architectural style that subtly references the rhythm and materiality of the surrounding High Street, blending traditional and modern elements.

Materials include natural brickwork, zinc, timber, and extensive sedum roofing to ensure durability and sustainability.

Key design features include:

- Retention and enhancement of the existing footprint to maximise private gardens.
- Sensitive massing and window placement to ensure privacy, with high-level rear windows.
- Green sedum roofs to integrate with tree lines, improve insulation, and reduce urban heat impact.
- Acoustic planning with bedrooms vertically stacked and living areas on the ground floor to minimise noise disturbance.
- Security features including electric shutters for privacy and protection.
- Compliance with Nationally Described Space Standards.
- Permeable resin-bound surfacing to improve drainage and soften visual impact.
- Raised ground floor at rear by 1m from ground level to mitigate surface water flood risk.

4.2 Landscaping and Amenity

Private outdoor space is provided for each unit: gardens for all ground floor units and additional rooftop terraces for the houses.

Landscaping integrates greenery around parking areas to maintain visual amenity and soften the urban environment.

5 Access and Parking

- Pedestrian access is maintained via two entrances from Northwood High Street.
- The site benefits from excellent public transport links, within walking distance of Northwood and Northwood Hills Underground stations and served by multiple bus routes.
- Vehicle parking includes one dedicated off-street space per unit (five in

total), consistent with local policy and appropriate for the housing mix.

- Existing vehicle access and servicing arrangements remain unchanged.
- Secure covered cycle storage is provided in accordance with London Plan standards.
- Ground floor flats are designed to meet Building Regulation M4(2) standards with step-free access for inclusive living.

6 Use and Amount

Unit Type	Quantity	Description	Target Space Standard*	Proposed Internal Floor Area (m ²)	Private Garden Area (m ²)	Notes
Two-bedroom houses	2	Duplex units with private gardens	70 m ² (2b4p)	96 (Ground Floor: 51.1 + First Floor: 44.9)	28 (22 + 6)	Meets NDSS for 2 bed, 4 person units
One-bedroom flats (GF)	2	Accessible, compact accommodation	50 m ² (1b2p)	50	7.5	Compliant with NDSS for 1 bed, 2 person units
Three-bedroom flat	1	Family-sized, with garden access	86 m ² (3b4p) / 93 m ² (3b5p)	93	22.7	Meets NDSS for 3 bed, 4–5 person units

7 Sustainability

The development integrates a comprehensive range of sustainability measures:

- High-performance insulation and glazing to enhance thermal efficiency.
- Photovoltaic (PV) panels installed where feasible to generate renewable energy onsite.
- Extensive green sedum roofs covering approximately 50% of roof areas to support biodiversity and reduce urban heat.
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), with green roofs absorbing rainfall and water-efficient landscaping reducing mains water demand.
- Dedicated electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure for each unit.
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems to optimise energy use and maintain indoor air quality.
- Smart building systems enabling residents to monitor and manage energy consumption via integrated controls.

These features align the development with local and national environmental targets, ensuring a low-impact, climate-responsive scheme.



Figure 1 – 3D Render of Front elevation showing proposed scheme by ESA.

8 Conclusion

This proposal represents a sensitive, design-led redevelopment of a centrally located site in Northwood, delivering five high-quality residential units that balance character, sustainability, and liveability. The scheme introduces a diverse housing mix—including two duplex houses, two ground floor flats, and one large family-sized flat—all with direct garden access and private parking, an uncommon offering for infill developments.

The development provides much-needed housing for a range of residents, including families, downsizers, and individuals requiring accessible accommodation. Each unit meets or exceeds the Nationally Described Space Standards and benefits from natural light, private amenity space, and strong visual and physical connections to the surrounding context. The design employs a cohesive contemporary architectural language that enhances the appearance of the site and contributes positively to the High Street's character.

Parking provision has been sensitively integrated, with one off-street space allocated per dwelling. This is consistent with the site's excellent proximity to public transport, including walking access to Northwood and Northwood Hills Underground stations and direct bus routes. As such, the balance between private vehicle use and sustainable transport options has been carefully considered.

While the site could have supported a higher number of flat-based dwellings, the proposed mix

of houses and flats is more appropriate to the location and surrounding context. It better responds to demand for high-quality homes suitable for new families wanting to live in central, well-connected neighbourhoods. This approach has already been reflected in similar recent developments nearby, such as the two pairs of new houses on Pine Needle Lane, the four infill houses at Ford's Place behind Hilliard Way, and the three houses behind 46A High Street.

By contrast, less cohesive flat conversions elsewhere along the High Street have not delivered the same design quality or spatial coherence. Our proposal maintains a unified design with well-articulated entrances and a welcoming layout, improving the streetscape and enhancing local character.

To mitigate the identified surface water flood risk, the proposed development incorporates a raised rear ground floor level, elevated by one metre above the surrounding floor levels, in accordance with the recommendations of the Flood Risk Assessment. This significantly reduces the risk of internal flooding.

Where practicable, all sleeping accommodation is located at first-floor level. For Flats A and B, the bedrooms are situated within the raised ground floor areas, ensuring that sleeping accommodation remains above the predicted flood level and complies with the recommended flood risk mitigation measures.

Each unit includes generous private amenity space—unusual for a site of this scale—which supports outdoor living and wellbeing. The proposed homes are set within a modern landscaped context that softens boundaries, improves security, and fosters biodiversity. Unlike the existing building, which is of limited architectural merit, the new scheme creates an attractive, sustainable, and welcoming environment.

Importantly, the proposal has been designed to minimise its impact on neighbouring properties, particularly those on Hilliard Road. No new windows overlook their gardens, and while the overall height of the proposal is greater than the existing structure, its architectural quality and visual interest offer a marked improvement.

In summary, this is a low-impact, high-quality development that makes efficient use of an underutilised site. It provides inclusive, attractive homes in a highly sustainable location while respecting the privacy and character of its surroundings. We respectfully seek the Local Planning Authority's support for this well-balanced and deliverable scheme or suggest alternative options for this site as it is in need of regeneration and the existing building is coming to the end of its life.

