

Land at Cripps Field, Springwell Lane, Harefield

Supporting Design Statement

The proposed development takes direct inspiration from the traditional farmstead typology, a familiar and contextually appropriate model within the rural landscape. Farmsteads are typically comprised of a collection of buildings arranged in a loose courtyard or cluster, often evolving organically over time to meet functional needs. This vernacular arrangement promotes a sense of community, informality, and practicality—qualities that this development seeks to reinterpret in a contemporary residential setting.

In this scheme, six family homes are arranged around a shared central courtyard, echoing the spatial organisation of traditional agricultural holdings. This layout not only fosters social interaction among residents but also provides a semi-private communal space that enhances the overall sense of place. The courtyard acts as a focal point of the development, giving structure to the site and strengthening its rural character.

As a key feature within this central space, a modest clock tower has been introduced, serving both a symbolic and functional purpose. Architecturally, it draws on historical rural precedents, where small towers or cupolas were often found on barns or estate buildings. In this scheme, the clock tower acts as a landmark element, helping to define the identity of the development, aid with wayfinding, and create a sense of arrival. It also contributes significantly to the character and placemaking of the courtyard, giving the space a subtle civic quality that binds the community together.

Each dwelling is oriented to maximise privacy while maintaining visual and spatial connections to the shared space, much like ancillary barns or outbuildings in a traditional farmstead. The irregular but balanced arrangement avoids overly rigid suburban geometries and instead embraces a more organic, informal pattern—consistent with how rural buildings are typically sited in response to topography, boundaries, and planting.

Materiality is also key to reinforcing the farmstead identity. The proposed use of timber cladding, sheet / corrugated metal and brickwork references the palette of functional rural buildings such as barns, byres, and stables. These materials age naturally over time and reflect the agricultural aesthetic while supporting sustainability and low-maintenance design objectives.

The development respects the natural boundaries of the site, with existing mature trees and established hedgerows retained and integrated into the site layout. These landscape features act as soft edges, reinforcing the sense that the homes are nestled within the countryside rather than imposed upon it—again, a characteristic typical of rural farmsteads.

Importantly, the proposal also responds to its dual context: the domestic scale of Springfield Lane to the south, and the more agricultural, rural setting to the north. This duality is reflected in both the scale and character of the proposed dwellings, creating a transitional edge that binds the new homes into their surroundings.

Through this considered reinterpretation of the farmstead typology, combined with sensitive landscaping and the introduction of a distinctive clock tower feature, the development achieves a balance between rural authenticity, modern family living, and placemaking—resulting in a scheme that is both context-sensitive and forward-looking.