

HAVERING PARK STABLES

HAVERING PARK STABLES, BOWER FARM ROAD
ATTE-BOWER

BUILDING SEPARATION AND LAYOUT
PREPARED BY FRONT. ARCHITECTURE LTD

FRNT_621_P01_Building Separation and Layout
SEPTEMBER 2025
ISSUE V3

FRONT.

01 Building Separation

Typical Building Separations

1.1 - Introduction

This document has been prepared in response to the reasons for refused for the application ref: P1698.24. The following document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying documents. The planners comments have been highlighted in red for reference, with our response being in black.

1.2 - Building Separation t

Having Council Comment

"The layout and position of units with no significant separation distances between units 5, 6 and 7, and units 9 when viewed from Bower Farm Road would have an overbearing impact which is unacceptable."

FRONT. Response

The proposed layout has been informed by the existing rural character of the area, where buildings are traditionally positioned in close proximity to one another. This is a well-established pattern in the surrounding landscape, as demonstrated by nearby agricultural sites which also feature close-knit relationships between structures. In this context, the relationship between Units 5, 6, 7, and 9 is not suburban or inappropriate, but rather reflects the authentic spatial qualities of rural clusters.

Whilst the officer has raised concern about limited separation distances, it is important to note that the proposed dwellings fully comply with national and local space standards in terms of internal layouts, garden provision, and outlook. The orientation of plots and the staggered positioning of elevations have been designed to prevent any sense of enclosure or overbearing impact, and to maintain good levels of daylight and privacy for future occupiers. The separation distanced between plots 5, 6, 7 and 9 are as below:
Plot 5-6: 4m
Plot 6-7: 2.77m
Plot 7-8/9: 4m

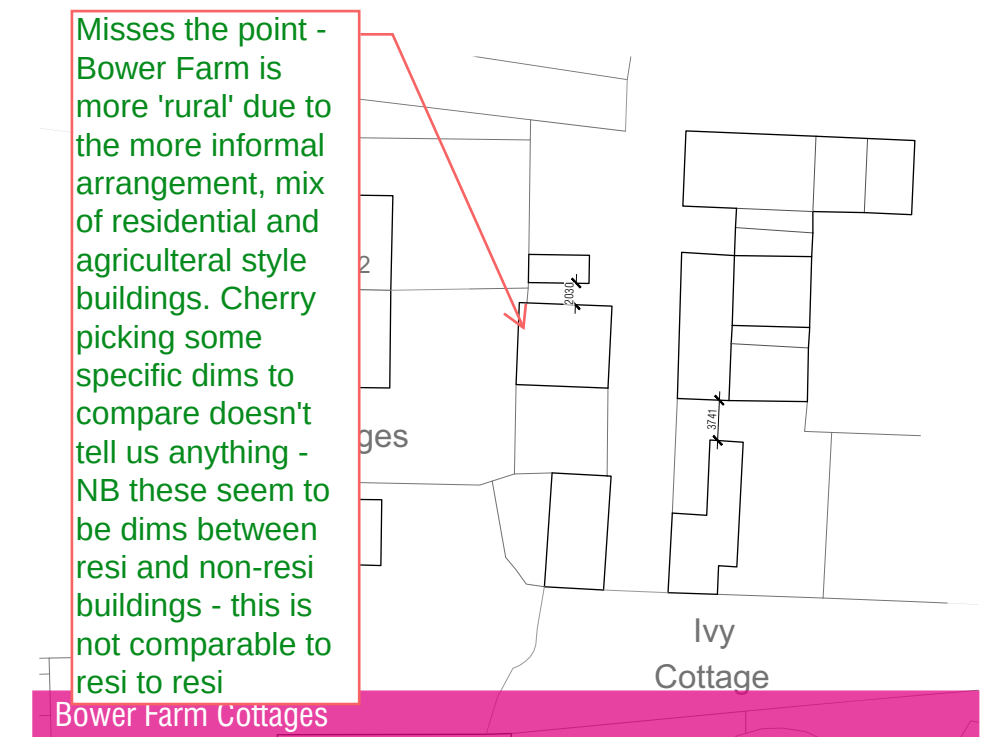
Boundary treatments are proposed as a combination of post-and-rail fencing and hedgerow planting, ensuring an appropriate rural character while also providing adequate definition and screening between plots. This delivers both privacy and security without introducing suburbanising features. Furthermore, no material harm has been identified to neighbouring properties beyond the site, confirming that impacts are contained within the development.

Overall, the proposed arrangement reflects the local rural pattern of development, reduces the perception of bulk through careful massing and orientation, and secures high standards of residential amenity. Accordingly, the concerns raised do not amount to demonstrable harm and should not justify refusal.

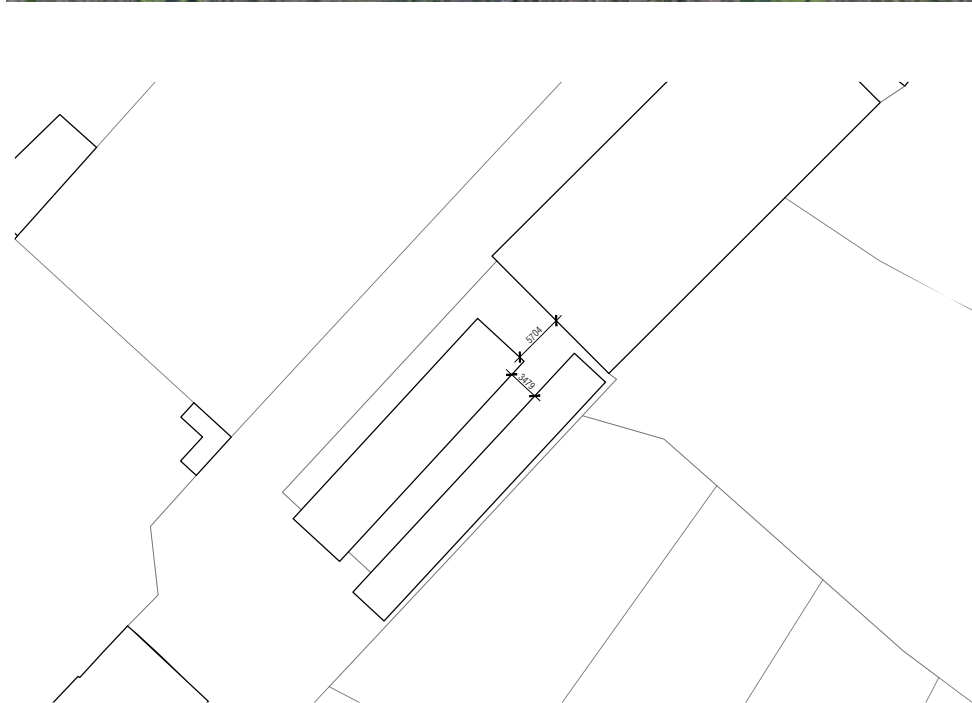


01 Building Separation

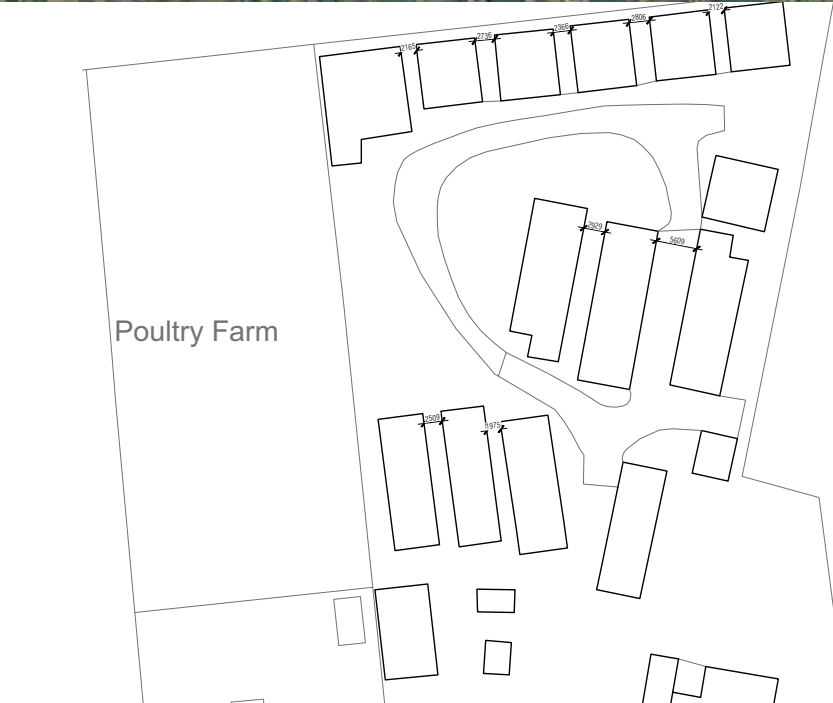
Typical Building Separations



01 Building Separation



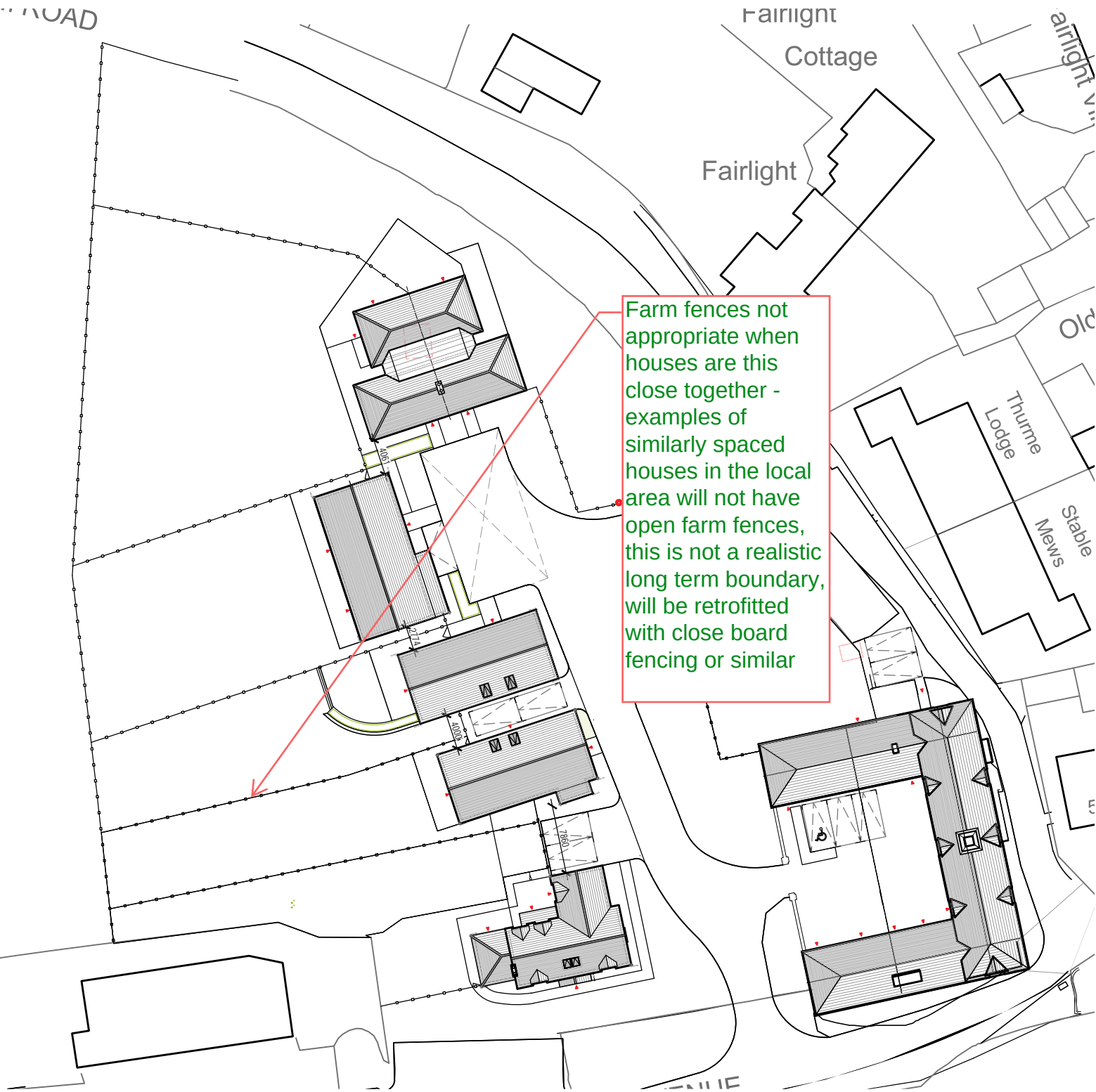
Forest Farm



Poultry Farm

01 Building Separation

Typical Building Separations



1.3 - Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed dwellings have been arranged in a manner that is consistent with the established rural character of the surrounding area, where close-knit clusters of buildings are a defining feature of traditional agricultural sites. The scheme reflects this farmstead/agricultural pattern rather than introducing a suburban street layout, thereby reinforcing local distinctiveness.

While the officer has raised concerns regarding separation distances, these are not out of keeping with the local context and do not result in unacceptable impacts on privacy, daylight, or outlook. Where additional measures are considered necessary, such as ensuring adequate privacy through boundary treatments, these can appropriately be secured by planning condition, as acknowledged within the officer's own report.

Taken together, the proposed arrangement ensures that the development is both respectful of its setting and capable of delivering high-quality living conditions for future residents, in full accordance with national and local policy.

02 LAYOUT

02Layout

2.1 - Farmstead Layout

Havering Council Comment

“The change in layout from the informal arrangement of barn-type buildings to a suburban cul-de-sac style is considered inappropriate within the Green Belt. The proposed scheme introduces repetitive plots, regular garden layouts, and hardstanding areas which are suburban in character and harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the Conservation Area.”

FRONT. Response

The proposed layout has been deliberately informed by the historic and agricultural character of the area, rather than imposing a suburban street pattern. The officer’s assessment overlooks the fact that farmsteads are characteristically arranged in compact clusters around shared spaces, a form which inherently results in close relationships between buildings. As set out in Historic Farmsteads: A Manual for Recording (Jeremy Lake and Bob Edwards, Historic England), traditional English farmsteads are typically defined by their grouping of buildings around yards or greens, with strong functional relationships between structures. This is the very principle adopted in the scheme, where dwellings are grouped in a courtyard-based composition that directly references the informal clustering of barns and outbuildings that have historically defined the site.

The resulting arrangement cannot be described as a “suburban cul-de-sac.” Instead, it provides an organic and contextually appropriate form that reflects the traditional rural settlement pattern of the area. Plot boundaries are enclosed defined by hedgerows and post-and-rail fencing, ensuring that suburbanising features such as close-boarded fences are avoided. Hardstanding is broken up with landscaping and planting, while the central space remains open and green in character, reinforcing the rural qualities of the site.

Furthermore, the proposal represents a net reduction in the footprint and volume of built form compared with the existing agricultural sheds, thereby reducing overall massing and improving the openness of the Green Belt. Taken together, these measures demonstrate that the proposed layout is not suburban or harmful, but instead is firmly rooted in the historic character of rural farmsteads and is consistent with both Green Belt and Conservation Area policy objectives.

Not what is proposed - detached buildings in a linear layout with small gaps between buildings is a suburban layout, not a farmstead style courtyard

Courtyard plans are the most common forms of farmstead layout, where the working buildings are arranged around one or more yards. The largest courtyard farms are found on high-status sites, estate farms and in the arable vales, wolds and downlands of England, and the smallest in stock-rearing and dairying areas. Cattle yards either developed as areas for treading straw from the threshing barn into manure, or – especially in upland areas – an area for moving cattle and storing the manure. They may have scatters of other farm buildings relating to routes and tracks, usually cart sheds and other ancillary buildings.

KEY

- farmhouse
- working building
- yard
- route/way

a-d) Loose courtyard farmsteads have detached buildings loosely arranged around one (a) or more (b – 2; c – 3; d – 4) sides of a yard.

e) L-plan plus buildings to 3rd or 4th side have detached and linked ranges set around a yard.

f-k) Regular courtyard farmsteads consist of linked ranges formally arranged around one or more yards:

- L-plans (f) which are typically small-medium in scale and have the buildings arranged as two linked ranges to create an L-shape.
- U-plans (g) which are medium-scale farmsteads, sometimes larger; with buildings arranged around three sides of a yard, which is open to one side.
- F-, E-, T-, H- or Z-shaped plans (h and i) which are arranged around two cattle yards.
- Full courtyard plans (j) which have working buildings around all four sides of the yard.
- Multi-yard plans (k) which have multiple yards grouped together and regularly arranged.

Dispersed plans have no focal yard area and the working buildings are dispersed along a route/way or within the boundary of the farmstead. They are concentrated in upland and wood pasture landscapes including areas close to common land for holding stock. They vary greatly in scale and are often bisected by route/ways and public footpaths.

- l) dispersed clusters where the working buildings are dispersed within the boundary of the steading.
- m) dispersed driftways which are dominated by the route/ways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another.
- n) dispersed multi-yards, which are large-scale farmsteads containing two or more detached yards, often with other scattered buildings.

Linear and other farmstead types are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads.

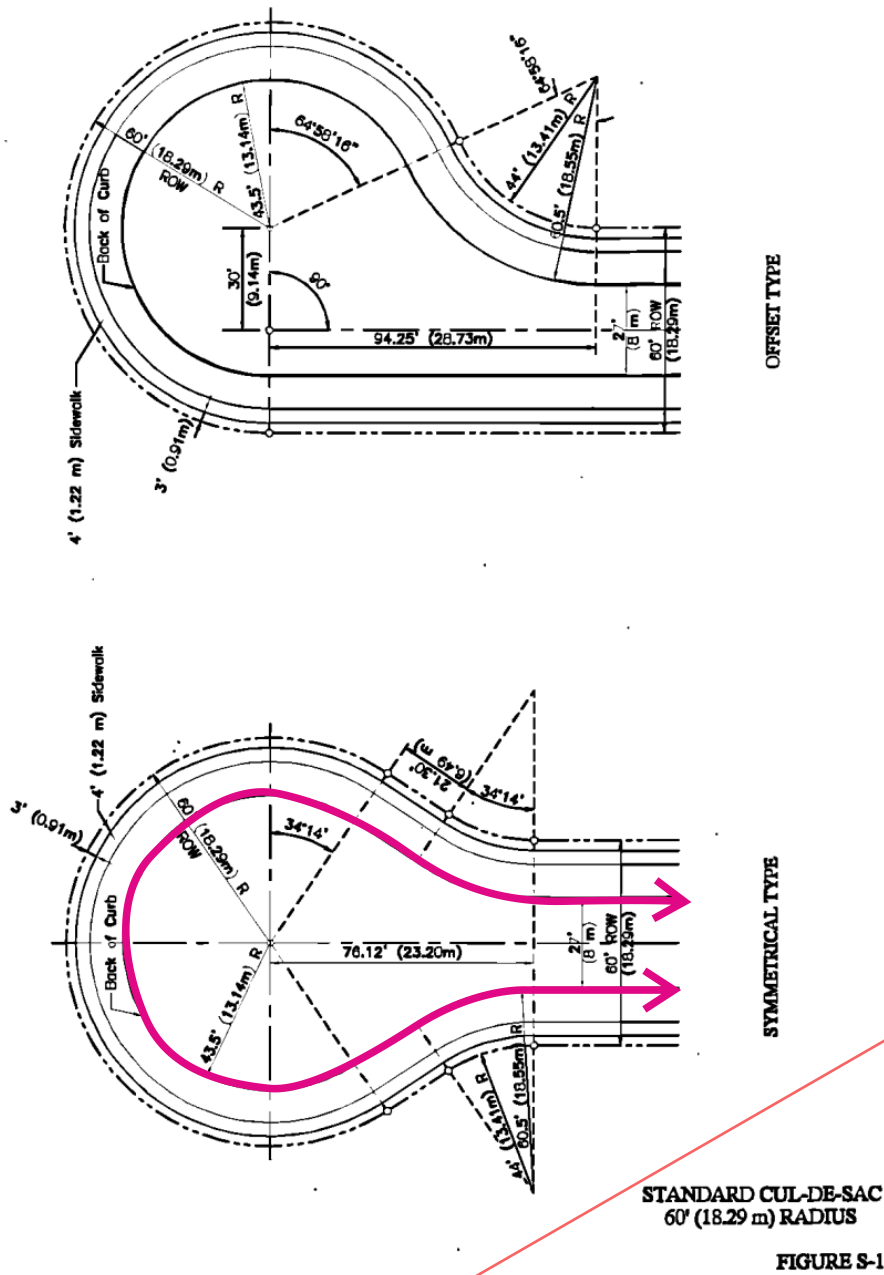
- o) linear farmsteads, where the houses and working buildings are attached and in-line, or have been extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range (p). They were either built in a single phase or have developed and extended in a piecemeal manner, and from the medieval period many were incorporated within larger farmsteads as they expanded into courtyard or dispersed plans.
- q) parallel plans where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between. They have often developed from linear farmsteads.
- r) row plans, often medium as well as small in scale, where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row.

02 Layout

2.2 - Cul De Sac Layout

The Council's assessment that the proposed layout represents a "suburban cul-de-sac" is not considered accurate. As shown in the accompanying diagram, the proposal does not form a closed or insular street pattern typical of a cul-de-sac arrangement. Instead, the layout is permeable, with a shared central courtyard space that allows visual and physical connections through the site and towards the surrounding landscape. The layout has been carefully designed to reflect the organic composition of traditional farmsteads, where buildings are arranged around a working yard rather than aligned along a suburban street frontage.

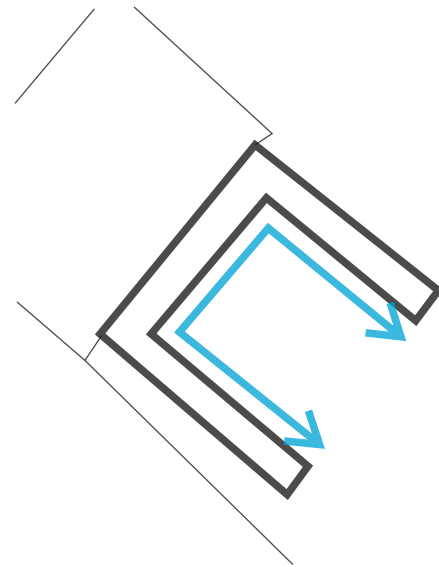
Unlike a cul-de-sac, which is typically defined by a singular vehicular focus and enclosed turning head, the proposed access serves as a low-key shared surface, maintaining a sense of openness and informality consistent with the site's rural character. The dwellings are set out in a loose cluster, with varied building lines and orientations that create an informal rhythm and allow views between and beyond buildings, ensuring the development remains visually and spatially connected to its wider setting.



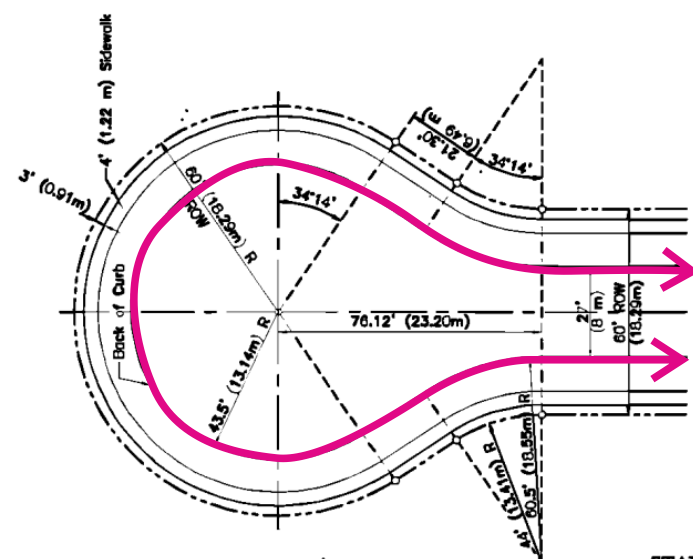
This is one type of cul de sac, there are plenty of examples in Havering of cul de sacs in Havering that are more similar to the proposed, with housing on one side and a different type of turning area for vehicles

02 Layout

Typical Farmstead Layout



Typical Cul De Sac Layout

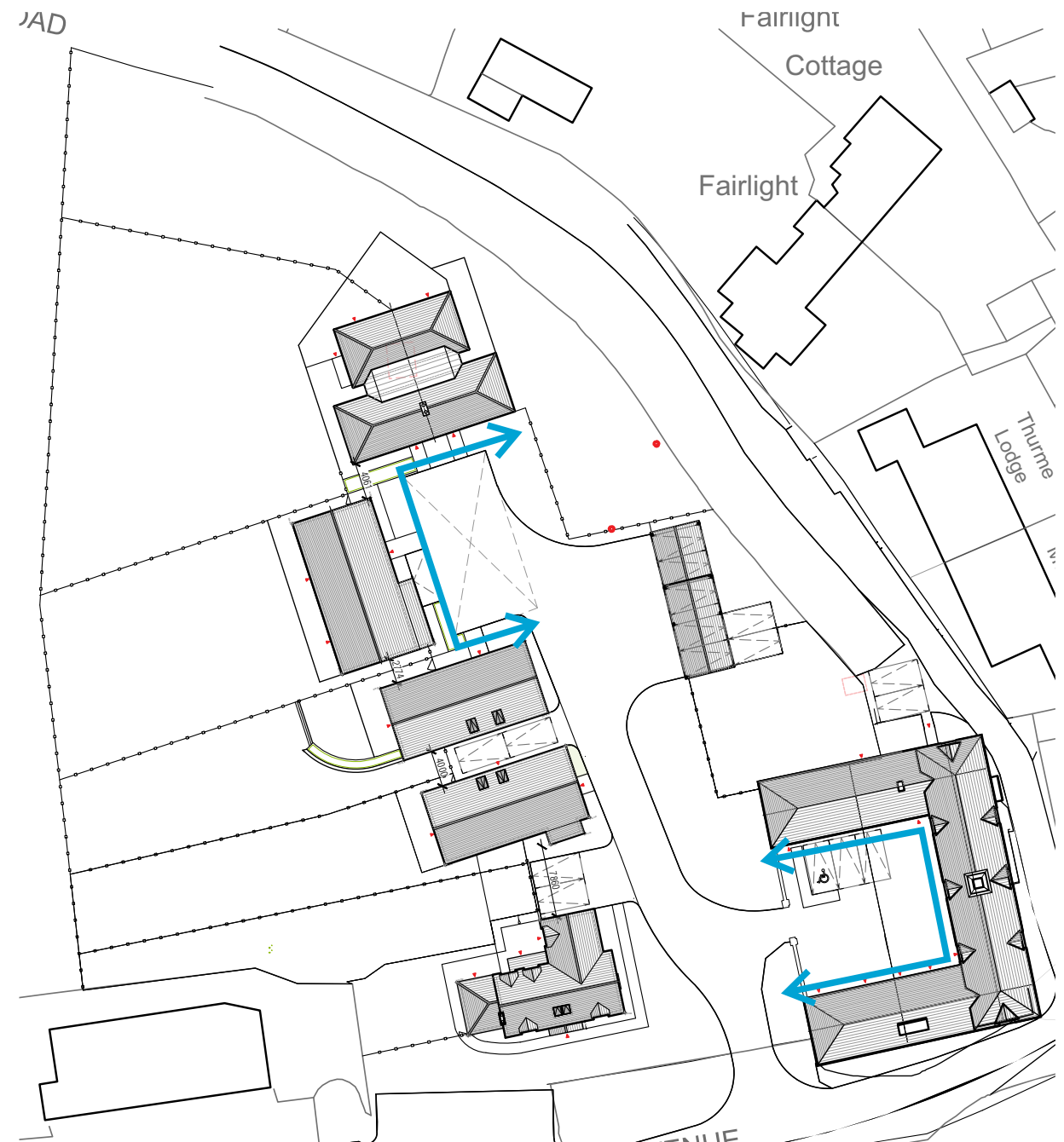


SYMMETRICAL TYPE

STANDARD CUL-DE-SAC
60' (18.29 m) RADIUS

FIGURE S-1

Proposed Site Layout



02 Layout

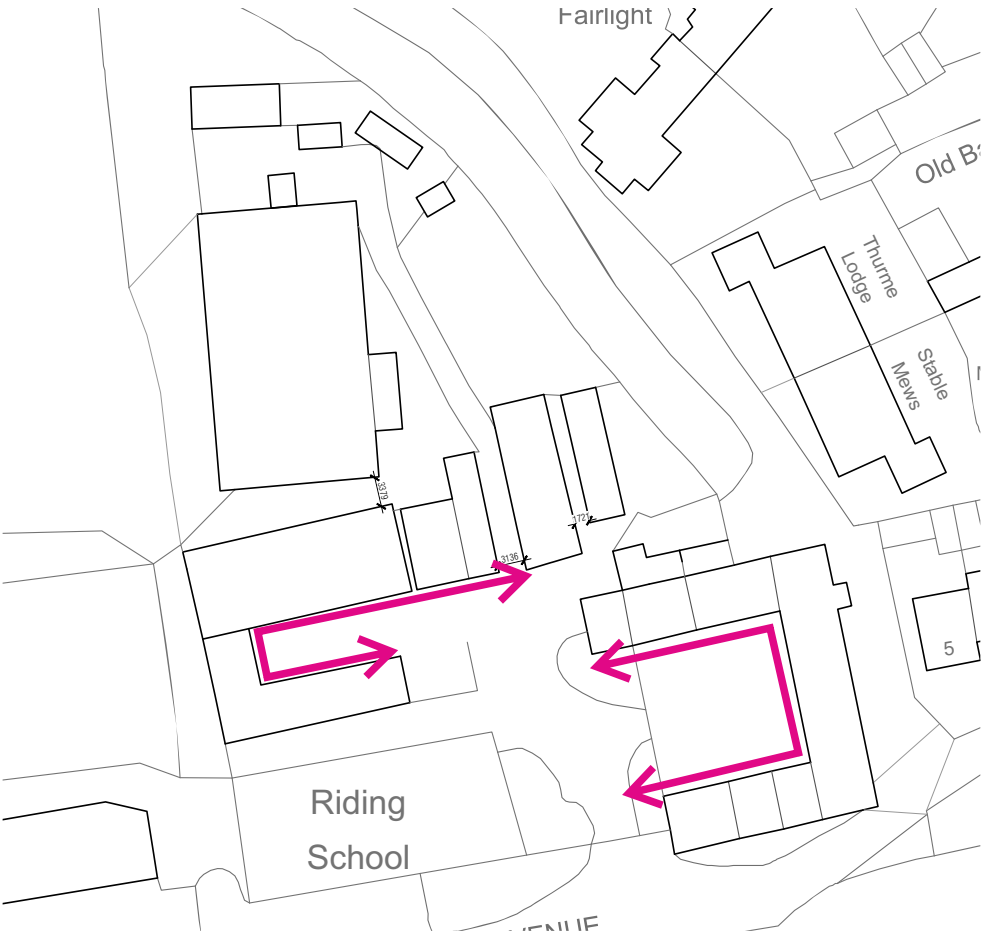
2.3 - Contextual Analysis

The proposed courtyard arrangement has been informed by the established pattern of development within the surrounding rural area. As the supporting diagrams demonstrate, traditional farmsteads in this part of the borough are commonly arranged as compact clusters of buildings enclosing a central space, with functional relationships between structures creating a strong sense of enclosure. This pattern is deeply embedded in the local rural character and provides an authentic basis for the appeal scheme.

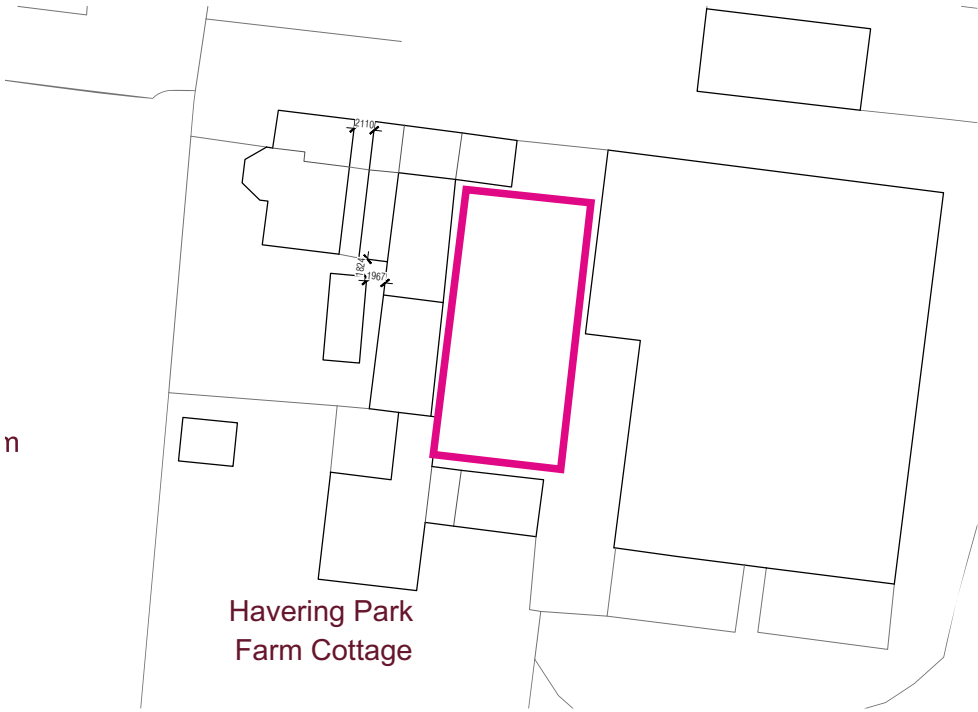
Importantly, this principle has been applied in contemporary residential development elsewhere in the borough. A directly relevant example is planning permission reference N0037.18 (London Borough of Havering), where a recently completed scheme adopts a courtyard-based layout closely resembling the pattern of traditional farmsteads. This approval confirms that the approach taken here is both contextually appropriate and accepted by the local planning authority as a suitable means of translating historic agricultural forms into a residential setting.

The proposal follows the same principle: buildings are grouped around a shared courtyard space rather than being set out in a suburban street pattern. Plot boundaries are compact and defined by hedgerows and post-and-rail fencing, while hardstanding is softened with landscaping to avoid suburbanising effects. Far from being out of keeping, the layout aligns with both historic farmstead precedent and recently approved development in the borough, reinforcing the rural character of the site and its setting within the Conservation Area.

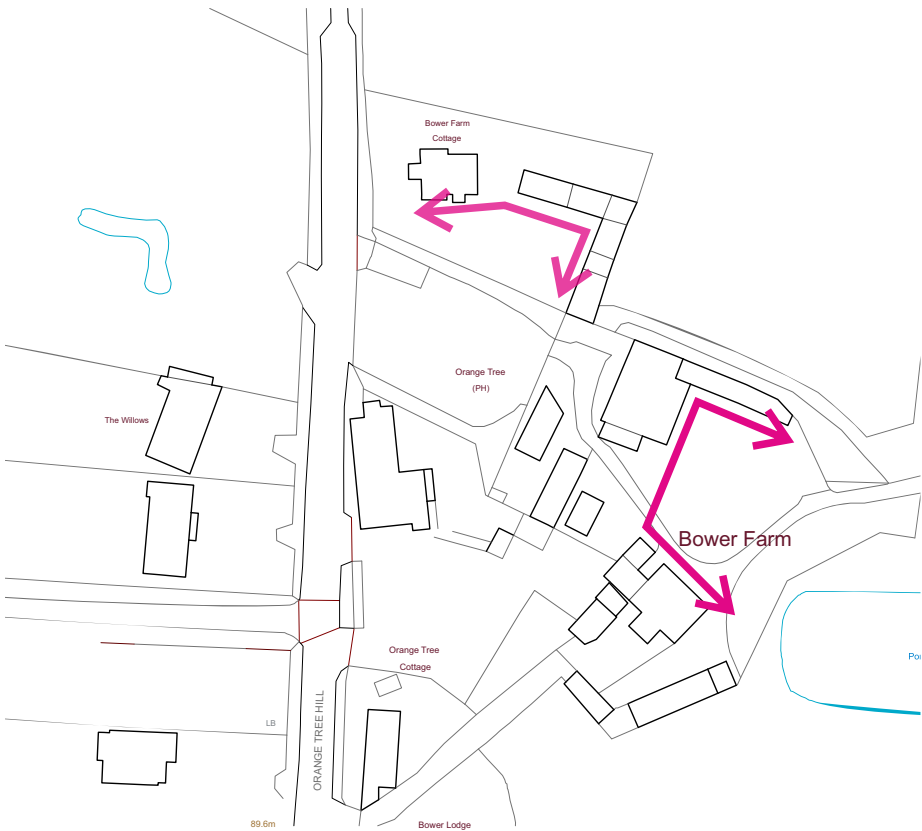
A particularly relevant comparison can be drawn with the nearby development approved under reference N0037.18, which demonstrates how the council has supported this very approach in practice. This scheme, set within a similar rural context, provides a useful precedent and is considered in more detail on the following page.



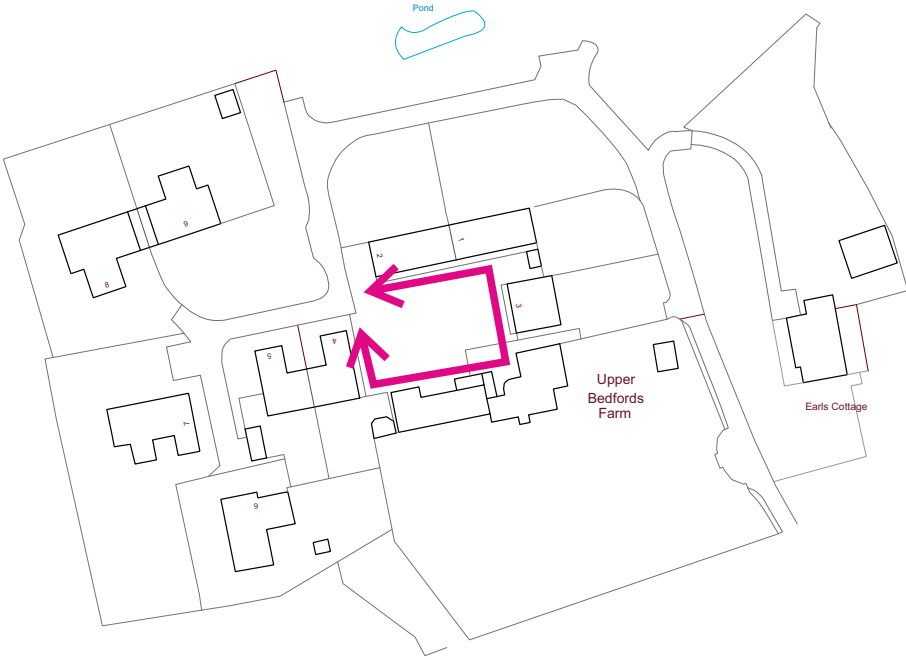
Havering Park Stables



Havering Park Farm Cottage



Bower Farm



Upper Bedfords Farm

02 Layout

2.4 - Surrounding Context

The proposed development has been carefully designed to respond to the established settlement grain and rural character of the surrounding area. The site sits within a wider context defined by farmsteads and courtyard groups, all of which demonstrate informal building arrangements and generous landscape settings. Examples such as Bower Farm, Havering Park Farm, and Upper Bedfords Farm illustrate the local pattern of rural clusters, where buildings are typically grouped around shared spaces or yards rather than arranged in formal rows.

The surrounding area displays a mix of suburban and semi-rural development patterns, ranging from linear frontages along North Road to small, enclosed groupings such as Samantha Mews. While Samantha Mews represents a more suburban typology, it nonetheless demonstrates that compact, inward-facing arrangements of dwellings, forming a natural termination within the street network, are an established feature within the local area. The proposed layout at Bower Farm Road follows a similar principle, creating a defined courtyard-style arrangement that reflects the area's existing pattern of clustered development while maintaining visual permeability and landscape connections to the north and east.

In terms of density, the proposed development achieves approximately 11.4 dwellings per hectare (DPH), which closely aligns with nearby examples such as Upper Bedfords Farm (10 DPH). This modest density reflects the low-intensity rural character of the area while making efficient use of previously developed land. The proposed scale and spacing of buildings, combined with generous landscaping and varied orientation, ensure that the development sits comfortably within its context and reinforces the pattern of rural settlement typical of Havering.



This is the problem, it is too similar to suburban style housing - this style of development does not positively contribute to the conservation area (unlike the existing farm style buildings)

02 Layout

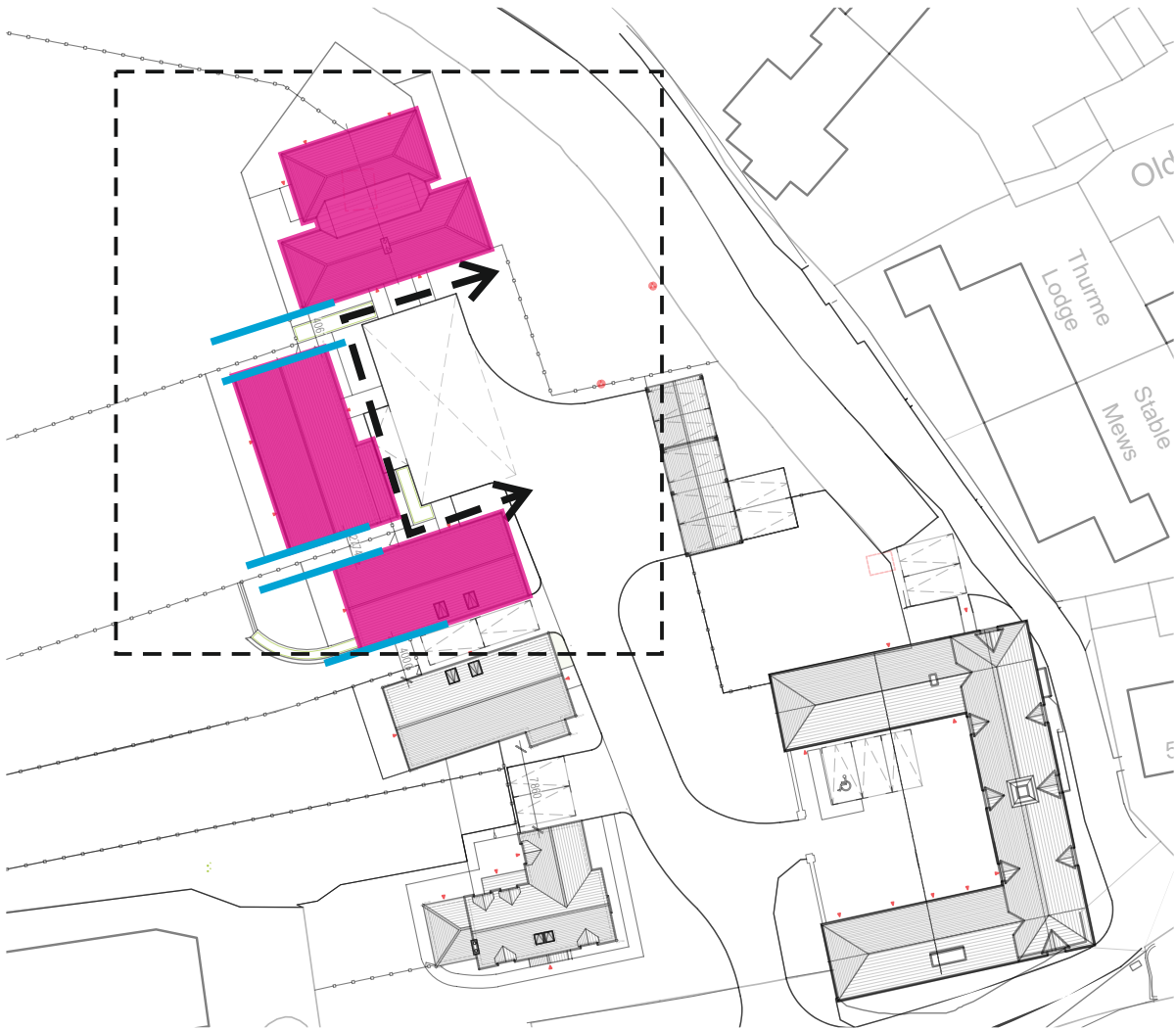
2.5 - Upper Bedfords View

Planning permission reference N0037.18, recently completed within the borough, provides a highly relevant precedent in support of the proposed scheme. That development, situated in a comparable rural setting, adopts a courtyard-based arrangement of dwellings which directly references the traditional clustering of agricultural buildings around a central space. The design intent and spatial strategy are strikingly similar to the proposal, with dwellings positioned in close proximity to one another and enclosing a shared courtyard in a manner that reflects established farmstead typologies.

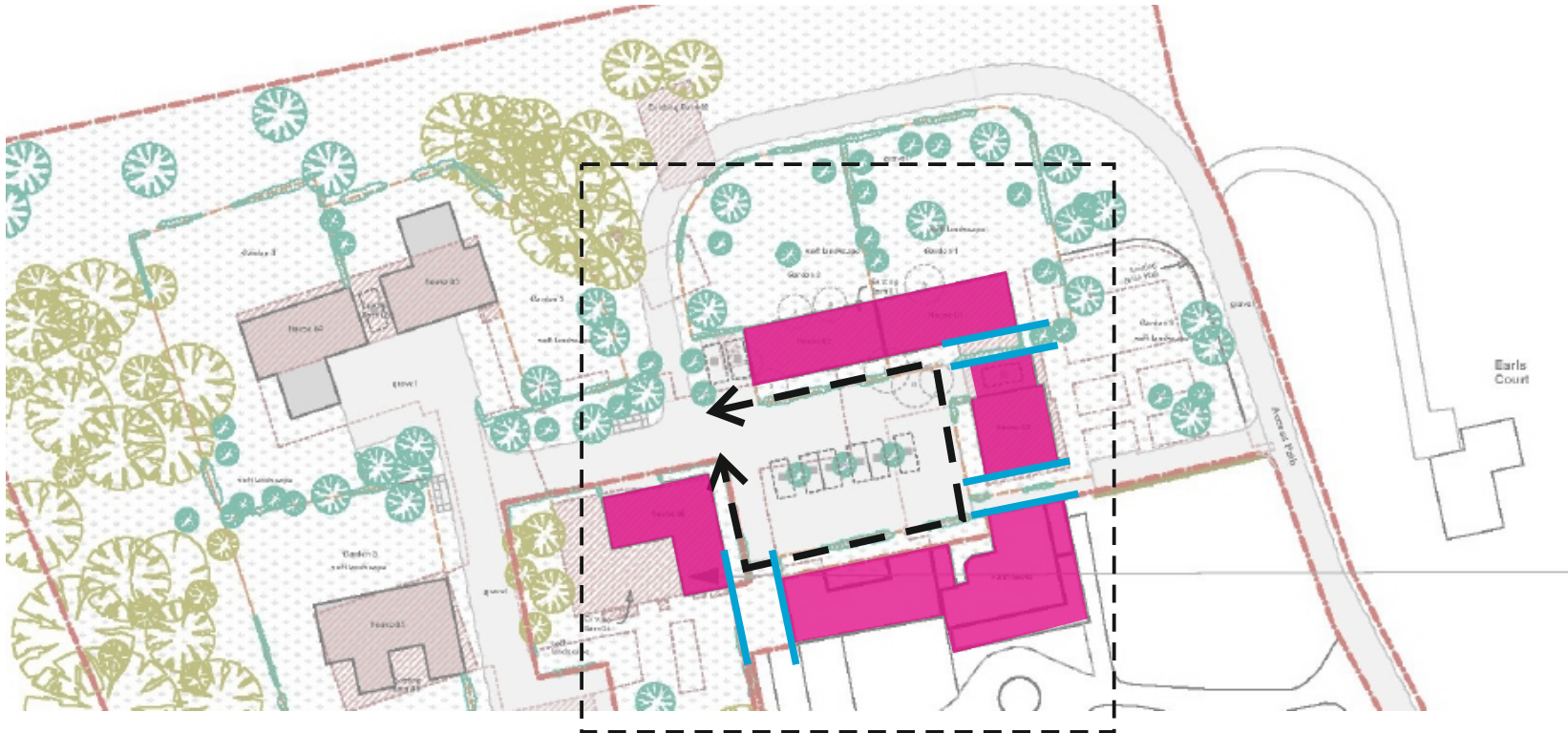
The council, in granting permission for N0037.18, recognised that this form of development does not represent a “suburban” or inappropriate layout but rather an appropriate translation of historic farmstead principles into a residential scheme. The development demonstrates how the courtyard model can deliver high-quality housing that is consistent with both Green Belt policy and heritage considerations.

The proposal follows the same design logic, reducing the overall bulk of existing structures while reinterpreting the farmstead form to create a cluster of dwellings that reinforce local distinctiveness. In this regard, the precedent of N0037.18 is directly comparable and provides clear evidence that such an approach is not only contextually appropriate but has already been accepted by the local planning authority in practice.

Proposed Scheme



Planning Application N0037.18



APPENDIX

END OF DOCUMENT

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