

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Re-instatement of the Courtyard Flat at Northaw House

## APPRAISING THE CONTEXT

## ASSESSMENT

**Physical Context:** Northaw House dates back to 1698 and is located to the west of Northaw Village and accessed from a private driveway.

**Social Context:** Northaw House was in use as a Country House until 1943 whence it became a boys Preparatory School, then an annexe to the Royal northern Hospital until 1969. Northaw House has been occupied by Architects Co-Partnership as its principle offices since 1972. The area that features in this application was used as the caretaker's flat until February 2002, when a change of use was granted to expand office use into this space.

No alterations were made to the building during its use as office space when it was principally used as single offices with rest and canteen facilities for one of our tenants.

**Economic Context:** In the current economic climate, where the architectural workload has significantly reduced and the demands for office space have fallen, other sources of income have been sought by the practice. In June 2012 the practice took on a tenant for the former flat and the purpose of this application is to regularise that use and apply for a retrospective change of use to its original function.

The change of use will have no economic impact on the locality in terms of business, but provides a welcome additional family dwelling unit.

## INVOLVEMENT

We have discussed and agreed the proposed development with our Landlord, Northaw Properties Limited. Our sub-tenants, Latitude Mapping and Technical Detail were fully aware of the flat at the bottom of the west wing of Northaw House when they took occupation of office accommodation within the Ballroom Block and the West Wing respectively.

## EVALUATION

We believe that the proposed change of use is in keeping with the local area and planning guidelines. It reinstates an element of residential use to the property and it provides a home for a family in an area with a shortage of suitable housing.

## DESIGN

No physical changes have been necessary to revert the use back to residential, as none had been made when it was changed to office accommodation.

**Use:** The accommodation and associated small garden area will be used as a domestic dwelling.

**Amount:** The floor space of the flat is 90 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Layout:** The flat is located on the ground floor of the West Wing at the rear of Northaw House. It is accessed from a gravel driveway branching from the main driveway to Northaw House

**Scale:** The flat is located within the existing building.

**Landscaping:** The existing rear garden is retained for recreational use by the occupants.

**Appearance:** No changes have been made to the building nor its decoration for the change of use.

## ACCESS

Access to the dwelling remains as previously with vehicular access and parking close to the building. Pedestrian access is from the lower courtyard at the front and by level pathway to the rear.

WELWYN HATFIELD PLANNING
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