



Planning and Heritage Statement

Change of use of the Cart Lodge to car storage (garage) for personal use in association with Prairie Barn; and the insertion of Cart Lodge doors.

Cart Lodge at West Lane Farm, West Lane, Pirton, Hertfordshire, SG5 3QP



Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Site Context	2
The Site	2
Planning History	5
3. Planning Considerations	7
Principle of Development	7
Design and Appearance	8
Heritage	9
Highways and Parking	10
Neighbouring Residential Amenity	10
Flooding	11
Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain	11
4. Planning Balance	12

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of an existing Cart Lodge to car storage (garage) for personal use, associated with Prairie Barn, and the insertion of doors to enclose the structure. No extensions or alterations to the footprint or scale of the building are proposed.
- 1.2. The application relates to a building within the wider West Lane Farm complex, where a number of agricultural buildings have been successfully converted to residential and other uses under permitted development rights.
- 1.3. This statement assesses the proposal against the relevant provisions of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031) and the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan, alongside other material considerations.

2. Site Context

The Site

- 2.1. The application site lies outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary of Pirton, within land designated as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 2.2. The application site comprises a three-sided Cart Lodge structure, agricultural in character, with a metal roof and timber-clad side and rear elevations. The front elevation is open.
- 2.3. The Cart Lodge is located within a former farmstead grouping at West Lane Farm, which has undergone a transition from agricultural use to a mix of residential and associated uses.



Image 1 – Front Elevation



Image 2: Rear and side elevation, facing east



Image 3: Rear and side elevation, facing west



Image 4: Internal space



Image 5: Roof view



Image 6: View facing west towards the Cart Lodge. The Cart Lodge is screened from views. Landscape boundary provides further screening to the west.

Planning History

2.4. The Cart Lodge doesn't have any relevant history, however, the wider site has an established planning history, including:

- **18/02017/PNQ - Change of use of agricultural barn to dwellinghouse (Class C3).** Approved 26 September 2018. This permission has been implemented. Now known as Prairie Barn.
- **19/01432/FP - Creation of vehicular access onto West Lane.** Approved 21 August 2019. This permission provides a formal residential access to the site, which has been implemented.
- **21/02673/PNQ - Conversion of agricultural building to four two-bed dwellings.** Approved 24 November 2021.
- **23/02422/PNR - Change of use of agricultural building to offices (Class**



E). Approved 30 November 2023.

- **24/02074/PNQ - Conversion of existing barn into four dwellinghouses.**

Approved 6 November 2024.

3. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 3.1. The proposed scheme seeks planning permission for the change of use of an existing Cart Lodge to car storage (garage) for personal use, associated with Prairie Barn, and the insertion of doors to enclose the structure.
- 3.2. Policy SP5 of the Local Plan establishes a general presumption against development in rural areas beyond the Green Belt, unless supported by more detailed policies.
- 3.3. Policy CGB1 supports development that relates to existing rural buildings or represents modest rural development.
- 3.4. Policy CGB4 is of direct relevance and supports the reuse of existing buildings where:
 - No major reconstruction is required;
 - There is no materially greater impact on the rural area; and
 - The development remains subordinate to the main building.
- 3.5. The proposal fully accords with these criteria:
 - The building is retained and reused, with no structural rebuilding;
 - The use as ancillary car storage (garage) is low intensity;

- The structure remains subordinate to Prairie Barn; and
- No additional built form is introduced.

3.6. Furthermore, the planning history of the wider site establishes a clear precedent for the re-use and adaptation of former agricultural buildings. A series of prior approvals and permissions have facilitated the conversion of buildings to residential and commercial uses, demonstrating that the principle of transitioning this farmstead from purely agricultural purposes to a mixed-use rural complex is already accepted.

3.7. In this context, the proposed use of the Cart Lodge for ancillary car storage (garage) for personal use represents a significantly less intensive and more sympathetic form of development than those previously approved elsewhere within the wider site. It is therefore entirely consistent with the established pattern of development on the site and reinforces the acceptability of the proposal in principle.

3.8. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Design and Appearance

3.9. Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relates to achieving well-designed places and states that planning decisions should ensure developments function well, add to the overall quality of the area, and are visually attractive because of good architecture and layout.

3.10. Policy PNP2 of the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan requires development to respect local character.

3.11. The key consideration is the enclosure of the currently open Cart Lodge. The proposal

has been designed to ensure that:

- The agricultural form and simplicity of the structure is retained;
- The proposed materials are appropriate to the rural setting and reflect comparable openings within the wider complex;
- The building continues to read as part of a farmstead grouping, rather than a suburban outbuilding.

3.12. The proposal would preserve the rural character of the site and comply with Policy PNP2.

Heritage

3.13. Policy HE1 requires assessment of impacts on designated heritage assets and their setting.

3.14. The nearest listed buildings, including Hammond's Farmhouse and associated structures, are located over 120 metres to the northwest of the application site. However, the land adjacent to the application to the west comprises open paddock land, with mature landscaping along the boundary with the application site.

3.15. The relationship between the site and these heritage assets is limited:

- Mature landscaping largely screens intervisibility;
- Views are restricted and glimpsed only in winter months;
- The Cart Lodge is experienced primarily within its immediate farmstead context.

3.16. The proposal itself is modest, involving:

- No increase in scale or massing;
- No alteration to the side elevations visible externally;
- The addition of doors to the open elevation.

3.17. As such, the development would preserve the setting of nearby listed buildings. Any effect would be neutral.

3.18. In accordance with the NPPF and Policy HE1, this level of impact carries substantial weight in favour of approval, particularly given the absence of harm.

Highways and Parking

3.19. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

3.20. The site benefits from an established vehicular access, approved and implemented under application reference 19/01432/FP.

3.21. The proposal does not intensify use in a manner that would materially affect highway safety.

3.22. The development is therefore acceptable in highways terms.

Neighbouring Residential Amenity

3.23. The nearest neighbouring property is located over 120 metres from the application site.

3.24. The proposal involves a low-intensity ancillary use and would not give rise to:

- Overlooking;
- Noise or disturbance;
- Loss of light or outlook.

3.25. There are no adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Flooding

3.26. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a very low probability of flooding.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

3.27. The application site comprises an existing building. As the proposal would not impact any on-site habitat, it falls within one of the statutory exemptions for Biodiversity Net Gain, as less than 25 square metres of on-site habitat would be affected.

3.28. The application is supported by a preliminary Ecological Appraisal. This supporting information confirms that the building does not support bats or protected species.

3.29. The proposal is therefore acceptable in ecological terms.

4. Planning Balance

- 4.1. This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed change of use of the existing Cart Lodge to car storage (garage) for personal use, associated with Prairie Barn, and the insertion of doors to enclose the structure complies with adopted planning policy as:
- It meets the requirements of Policies SP5, CGB1 and CGB4 of the Local Plan;
 - Respects the rural character of the area in accordance with the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Preserves the setting of nearby listed buildings, with no heritage harm; and
 - Raises no technical constraints in terms of highways, amenity, flood risk, or ecology.
- 4.2. The proposal represents a modest and appropriate reuse of an existing rural building, supporting the continued viable use of the wider site without introducing additional built form.
- 4.3. In accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.