

025 - Heritage Statement

The Ramblers, High Street, Barley, SG8 8JA

OCTOBER 2025

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1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement supports a planning application for the construction of a modest garden outbuilding within the curtilage of The Ramblers, a Grade II listed building situated on High Street in Barley, Hertfordshire. The proposal concerns the erection of a single-storey structure measuring 6 metres by 3 metres and 2.5 metres high, constructed in charred thermowood and positioned discreetly within the rear garden. Access to the outbuilding will be via the existing side gate and driveway, avoiding any need for alterations to the historic fabric of the listed building. The purpose of this Statement is to assess the heritage significance of the site and its wider context, to describe the proposal, and to evaluate its impact on both the listed building and the Barley Conservation Area.

2. Site Context and Heritage Significance

The Ramblers is a Grade II listed early eighteenth-century timber-framed building, later altered in the nineteenth century and formerly known as the King William Public House. Its historic character is defined by its timber frame, rendered and weatherboarded elevations, traditional sash windows and its contribution to the established frontage along High Street. The building forms part of the Barley Conservation Area, a historic village with medieval origins and a streetscape characterised by traditional materials, long-established plot patterns and a mixture of historic cottages and later development.

Although the listed building contributes positively to the conservation area, the rear garden—where the proposed outbuilding is located—plays only a limited role in its heritage significance. It is not visible from High Street and does not form part of any important public views. The immediate context also includes a neighbouring building clad in black timber, meaning the proposed dark-timbered outbuilding would sit comfortably within the existing visual setting.



3. Description of the Proposal

The proposal involves the construction of a small, detached, single-storey garden outbuilding situated within the rear garden of The Ramblers. The structure will measure 6 metres in length, 3 metres in width and will not exceed a height of 2.5 metres. It will be built using charred thermowood, a dark and recessive timber cladding that provides a natural, unobtrusive appearance suited to a landscaped setting. A sedum green roof is proposed, helping the building blend further into the garden and reducing its visual impact. The outbuilding will be accessed via the existing side gate and driveway, meaning no alterations are required to the fabric of the listed building. It is intended to provide additional functional space while remaining discreet and visually subordinate to the main dwelling.

4. Design Approach and Heritage Considerations

The design approach has been guided by the need to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building while maintaining the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The outbuilding has therefore been kept deliberately modest in scale, with a low profile and a subdued material palette. The charred thermowood cladding provides a dark, natural finish that allows the structure to sit unobtrusively within the garden. This material choice also reflects the immediate context, as the neighbouring building is clad in black timber, meaning the proposed outbuilding will integrate comfortably with its surroundings and will appear consistent with existing built form in the rear plots.

Positioning the building within the rear garden ensures it is entirely screened from High Street and from key viewpoints within the Conservation Area. Existing boundary treatments and planting will be retained to help soften its appearance further. As a detached structure that does not rely on the listed building for support, the outbuilding is fully reversible and can be removed in the future without affecting historic fabric. Overall, the design respects the traditional depth and pattern of rear plots in Barley and reflects the established convention of smaller, subordinate garden buildings positioned behind the main street-fronting dwellings.

5. Assessment of Impact

The outbuilding has been designed and positioned so that it does not interfere with the fabric or legibility of the listed building. As a small, standalone structure set well within the rear garden, it remains visually secondary and does not compete with the historic dwelling, which continues to read as the principal element within the plot. Its low height and subdued materials ensure that it recedes into the garden rather than drawing attention away from the architectural features that contribute to the building's significance.

In terms of setting, the proposal occupies an area of the garden that plays only a limited role in how the listed building is experienced. The significance of The Ramblers is primarily appreciated from its street-facing elevation, which remains wholly unaffected. Because the outbuilding sits entirely outside public views and does not disrupt the understanding of the historic plot form, its introduction does not alter the way the listed building is perceived. The effect on setting is therefore neutral.

For the Barley Conservation Area, the proposal leaves the established pattern of development unchanged. High Street's historic frontage, key views, and characteristic mixture of traditional building forms remain intact and unaltered. Small ancillary buildings within rear plots are consistent with the historic evolution of Barley, and the restrained design of the proposed structure ensures it fits comfortably within this context. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area will therefore be preserved.

6. Conclusion

The proposed outbuilding has been carefully designed and sited to ensure it preserves both the significance of The Ramblers as a Grade II listed building and the character and appearance of the Barley Conservation Area. Its modest scale, low height, recessive materials and position within the rear garden ensure that the listed building remains the visually dominant structure on the plot and that no historic fabric is affected. This aligns with the objectives of the *Barley Conservation Area Character Statement*, which emphasises the importance of protecting the historic street frontage, traditional plot patterns and the rural character of the village.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Sections 199–202 relating to heritage assets, great weight has been given to the conservation of the listed building and its setting. The proposal results in no harm to the heritage significance of the asset and does not alter the way it is experienced from the public realm. As such, the development meets the NPPF requirement to sustain and enhance the historic environment.

The statutory duties under Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 have also been satisfied: the listed building's special architectural and historic interest is preserved, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is maintained. The proposal accords with the principles of local heritage policies, which seek high-quality, contextually appropriate design and the protection of designated heritage assets.

Overall, the outbuilding represents a sensitive and proportionate form of development that respects the established character of Barley, preserves the setting of The Ramblers, and maintains the special interest of the Conservation Area.