

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Outbuilding at Great Barn, Rabley Heath Road,
Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9UA

Ref: HAL/8402-OB/PS, October 2025

REV. A 19.11.2025

INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement supports a full application for the erection of an outbuilding on land to the rear of Great Barn, Rabley Heath Road, Welwyn (AL6 9UA).

Great Barn is a **Grade II listed building**; however, no physical works are proposed to the listed structure or to an existing outbuilding within its curtilage. Accordingly, **Listed Building Consent is not required**.

The site lies within the **North Hertfordshire Green Belt**, in an established area of **mature woodland** planted approximately 25 years ago. The woodland has developed into a valuable **biodiversity habitat**, comprising native trees, managed hedgerows, and features that support owls, bats, hedgehogs, deer, and foxes. The woodland is regularly maintained to encourage habitat diversity and ecological health.

The proposed timber outbuilding will provide an enclosed equipment room to support the ongoing management, maintenance, and ecological stewardship of the woodland.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

Paragraphs **10–11** of the NPPF place a presumption in favour of **sustainable development**, requiring that planning decisions support development that improves the environment, mitigates climate change, and makes efficient use of land.

Paragraphs **153–154** relate to development within the Green Belt. Paragraph 154 confirms that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is **inappropriate** except for certain limited purposes. One such exception, at **Paragraph 154(a)**, allows for the erection of **buildings for agriculture and forestry**.

The proposed outbuilding directly supports the ongoing **forestry and woodland management activities** within the site, providing a necessary facility for storage of maintenance equipment. As such, it qualifies as **appropriate development** under the NPPF exception and preserves the **openness and character** of the Green Belt.

Local Policy – North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan (2011–2031)

The relevant local planning policy is contained in the **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031**, adopted in 2022. The following policy is most relevant:

- **Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt** – States that the Green Belt in North Hertfordshire will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national policy. Development will only be permitted where it complies with the NPPF and maintains openness and rural character.

Compliance with National and Local Green Belt Policy

The proposed outbuilding fully accords with both **NPPF paragraphs 153–154** and **NHDC Policy SP5** for the following reasons:

1. **Appropriate Use in the Green Belt:**
The outbuilding is directly associated with the maintenance of an established woodland and supports forestry-related activities. As such, it falls within the NPPF exception for “buildings for agriculture and forestry” and therefore does not constitute inappropriate development.
2. **Preservation of Openness:**
The building is **modest in size**, and its location is within an existing open area amongst the trees. It does not extend built form beyond existing boundaries or encroach into open countryside.
3. **Sympathetic Design:**
The proposed materials—**timber construction, black horizontal cladding, and a felt roof**—are typical of rural utility structures and allow the building to blend naturally into its woodland surroundings. The design and height are consistent with **Class E permitted development** thresholds, ensuring that the proposal remains proportionate and unobtrusive.
4. **Environmental Stewardship and Biodiversity:**
The outbuilding facilitates responsible woodland management, which maintains and enhances biodiversity, supports carbon sequestration, and improves local air quality.
5. **No Impact on Access or Residential Use:**
Access will remain via the existing route through the rear garden into the woodland. There is no change of use, no new vehicular access, and no intensification of activity. The proposal has **no impact on residential amenity** or parking arrangements.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

The proposal represents a form of **sustainable rural development** by supporting the long-term health of existing woodland. Woodland management contributes to:

- Carbon capture and climate change mitigation;
- Biodiversity enhancement;
- Improved landscape and air quality; and
- The preservation of the rural environment in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 11 and NHDC sustainability objectives.

CONCLUSION

The proposed outbuilding is a **modest, functional, and sensitively designed structure** that provides essential support for the ongoing maintenance of a mature woodland within the Green Belt.

The development:

- Constitutes **appropriate development** under **NPPF Paragraph 154(a)** as a building for forestry purposes;
- Fully complies with **NHDC Local Plan Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt**, maintaining openness and rural character;
- Delivers **sustainable development** benefits in line with **NPPF Paragraph 11**.

For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the proposal represents **appropriate and policy-compliant development within the Green Belt** and should be granted planning permission.