
PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed conversion of garage to a guest bedroom with wet room at Great Barn, Rabley Heath Road, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9UA
Ref: HAL/8402/PS, March 2025

INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the application to convert a garage at Great Barn on Rabley Heath Road, Welwyn to a guest bedroom with wet room.

The garage is not listed, but it is within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building (EAST BARN AT SISSERVERNES) and the conversion will have a limited impact on the setting of the listed building. Great Barn is to the southeast of the side of the outbuilding and there are neighbouring listed buildings to the north (NORTH BARN AT SISSERVERNES) and south (SISSERVERNES FARMHOUSE) of the site.

The garage is in the Green Belt.



Existing office conversion in foreground

Garage at end

LISTING

The official entry list for the listed building is as follows:

EAST BARN AT SISSERVERNES

GV II

Barn. Late C16, said to be 1592. Weatherboarded. Plain tile roof. Tarred brick base. 5 bays. Heavy box frame walls with close-set studs and deep mid-height rail. Tie beams with curved braces. Arch-braced collar purlins. Some curved wind braces. Later gabled cart entrance on

SE side. C18/19 timber frame extension on SW.

Listing NGR: TL2241117948



Garage front elevation

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GREEN BELT

National Planning Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF also advises that decision takers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 149 of the Framework advises the new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate except in certain specified circumstances, and paragraph 149c) sets out that one such exception is *'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.'*

Paragraph 150d) also explains that the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt is not inappropriate *"provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction."*

- Re-use of the garage to provide a guest bedroom with wet room is considered to constitute sustainable and appropriate development within the Green Belt

EXISTING GARAGE

The property is accessed from Rabley Heath Road via a shared access road. At you enter the property there is a courtyard area enclosed by a brick boundary wall, Great Barn, home office and the adjacent garage. The garage is currently used as a storage area for garden equipment.

The rear and side of the out-building are enclosed by an attractive solid brick wall, with a saddleback brick coping. The wall tapers down in height along the flank walls. The wall to the rear is on the boundary with the neighbour at Sisservernes Farmhouse but in the applicant's ownership.

As part of the submission for the adjacent office conversion (23/01344/FPH & 23/01338/LBC, DATED 18.08.2023) a structural engineer was appointed to advise on the condition of the existing structure and suitability to convert. The Visual Structural Assessment Report covered the garage area and therefore accompanies this application. A summary of the advice is as follows:

'The concrete slab in the garage area appears to be a more recent addition as it appears to be more even and does not exhibit any signs of distress in the form of cracking.'

'The proposals for the conversion of the existing outbuilding comprise a new structure inside the three walls. This has a beneficial impact on the rear brick wall in so far as the proposed internal structure will offer lateral restraint to the rear brick wall.'

'So in summary, we would suggest that retention and subsequent repair of the existing three brick walls is a viable proposal subject to the findings of the trial/s:

- Confirmation of the prevailing ground conditions
- Confirmation of the foundation profile/width and depth

DESIGN

The timber structure across the front of the office was re-built, and a new post at the north west end of the garage will be replicated to match. The brick wall will be insulated internally.

The front face of the bedroom will span between the timber posts in line with the existing garage doors (to be removed). The windows will be full height to match the office conversion, and will have high-level opening windows on the side elevations to provide secure natural ventilation to the bedroom.

Glazing will be in wood painted black to match the office conversion.

The roof over the garage was replaced (felt) as part of the office conversion but will require insulating above the garage as part of the conversion.

2no. flat roof lights are proposed, one above the bedroom, and a one over wet room to maximise natural light, as the front elevation will be north facing.

Remaining areas of wall will be finished in horizontal timber boarding, painted black, to match office conversion.

The existing floor slab may need to be replaced, with an appropriate damp proof membrane and insulation to comply with the Building Regulations.

AMOUNT

The conversion does not increase the footprint of the garage, therefore no increase in floor area proposed.

USE

The building is currently C3 residential use, and no change of use is proposed.

The proposed conversion will not have access to a kitchen, and therefore guests will need to come into the main house for meals.

SCALE

The proposed alterations are relatively minor and small in scale.

ACCESS

Access to Great Barn will remain as existing and the proposed alterations will not affect the parking arrangements because the garage is used for storage and there is ample parking in the courtyard.

The guest bedroom will be accessed through the home office. It has been designed to be suitable for a wheelchair user (door width and turning circle) and has a wet room because it is likely to be used by a family member who uses a wheelchair.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that the proposed development is suitable on the following grounds.

- The proposed alterations are minimal because the adjacent outbuilding has already been converted to an office. The conversion of the garage will enhance the overall appearance of the building.
- Minimal changes are proposed to the external appearance of the building and result in no harm to the setting of the nearby Grade II listed buildings.
- The proposed materials will be in keeping with the existing properties to ensure the alterations are sympathetic.
- The proposals are considered sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- The proposals are considered to constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 149 c) and 150 d) of the NPPF.
- The conversion will provide an accessible guest bedroom for visiting family members.