

THE OLD BARN

WELWYN EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

PLANNING STATEMENT

**CONVERSION OF 4 STABLES TO A ONE BED DWELLING,
FORMATION OF AMENITY SPACE, AND PROVISION OF CAR
PARKING, CYCLE STORAGE, AND BIN STORAGE
(DEVELOPMENT PARTIALLY CARRIED OUT)**

AUGUST 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following statement has been prepared in support of a Planning Application for the *“conversion of 4 stables to a one bed dwelling, formation of amenity space, and provision of car parking, cycle storage, and bin storage (development partially carried out)”* at The Old Barn, Welwyn Equestrian Centre, Pottersheath Road, Pottersheath.
- 1.2 A similar application was recently refused under 24/02636/FP for *‘Conversion of 4 stables to two one-bed flats. (Development already carried out)’* in June 2025. This application has been prepared to address the previous reasons for refusal. This includes reducing the number of units to one which exceeds the NDSS, the insertion of additional windows and rooflights to increase the amount of natural light, the provision of designated amenity space, parking, and refuse areas, and the provision of a Noise Report which demonstrates that there are no unacceptable noise impacts as a result of the equestrian business.
- 1.3 The buildings are currently still as they were at the time of the previous application. This proposal seeks to make amendments to the buildings and the site layout, so the development has been partially carried out.
- 1.4 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Noise Report prepared by HA Acoustics.
- 1.5 The Statement is set out as follows

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Site Description
3.0 Planning History
4.0 The Proposal
5.0 Planning Policy
6.0 Planning Analysis
7.0 Conclusions

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The Old Barn is situated at the Welwyn Equestrian Centre on Pottersheath Road, Pottersheath.
- 2.2. The Planning Policy Map identifies that the site is within the Green Belt, and not within a settlement boundary.
- 2.3. The Old Barn is a single storey former stable block, which has been converted to two dwellings.
- 2.4. The building is within a courtyard which accommodates several other dwellings which have also been converted from former equestrian buildings, as well as the main house known as Arnolds Hall.
- 2.5. Stables which serve the equestrian business are situated on the opposite side of the access road, to the south west.
- 2.6. The site is served by a shared access off Pottersheath Road which is used for the residential and equestrian uses.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. Relevant planning history for the site is outlined below.

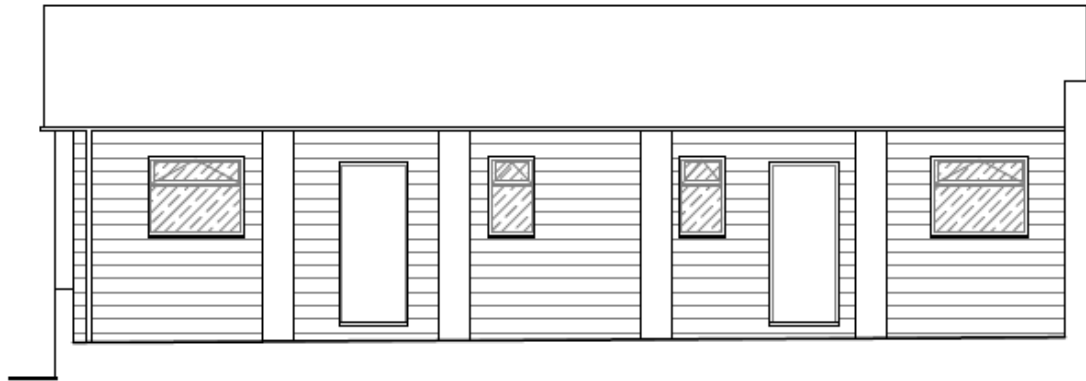
24/02636/FP

Conversion of 4 stables to two one-bed flats. (Development already carried out).

Refused: 5th June 2025

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal is for the *"conversion of 4 stables to a one bed dwelling, formation of amenity space, and provision of car parking, cycle storage, and bin storage (development partially carried out)."*



PROPOSED SOUTH EAST ELEVATION

- 4.2 The dwelling has a floorspace of 64sqm, and comprises of an open plan kitchen, living area, and study, bedroom with ensuite, and separate shower room. The open plan area is served by two windows and two rooflights.
- 4.3 It is proposed to provide an amenity area at the front of the dwelling which is to be bounded by a facing brick wall 0.225m wide x 0.9m high.
- 4.4 Cycle storage is to be provided in the outbuilding which adjoins the amenity area, and bins are to be stored to the rear of this building. A designated car parking space is also to be provided within the courtyard.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1. The following national and local planning policies are considered relevant to this proposal.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As set out in paragraph 2, planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.3. The Framework should be read as a whole, and therefore all policies within the Framework are relevant to the determination of an application; however, some parts are more relevant than others, and the following paragraphs are considered most relevant to this application:
- 5.4. **NPPF Paragraph 11**
Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole

5.5. **NPPF Paragraph 135**

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.6. S38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Local Plan for this location is the North Herts Local Plan (2011-2031). Policies relevant to this proposal are provided below.

North Herts Local Plan (2011-2031)

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

Policy D1: Sustainable Design

Policy D3: Protecting Living conditions

Policy T2: Parking

6.0 PLANNING ANALYSIS

6.1. The proposal is for the *“conversion of 4 stables to a one bed dwelling, formation of amenity space, and provision of car parking, cycle storage, and bin storage (development partially carried out).”*

6.2. The issues for consideration are:

- Principle of Development
- Design And Appearance
- Living Conditions Of The Occupiers
- Parking
- Refuse

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

6.3. The site is within the Green Belt where inappropriate development will not be approved except in very special circumstances (NPPF Paragraph 153). NPPF Paragraph 154 sets out exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Exception h) iv is relevant to this proposal and relates to the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

6.4. It was acknowledged in the Officers Report for the previous application (24/02636/FP), that:

“...the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and therefore the development would not be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In terms of openness the converted buildings have been on site for some time and no extensions are proposed therefore there would be no harm to openness arising from the residential use.

- 6.5. The proposed use of the building for residential purposes is therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and the proposal is acceptable in principle.

DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

- 6.6. Two doors and two windows have already been inserted into the front elevation. It is also proposed to add a window to the side elevation of the living area, and two roof windows. The building will therefore largely retain its existing appearance.
- 6.7. It is also proposed to erect a 0.9m wall around the front of the dwelling to provide a boundary for the amenity space.

LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE OCCUPIERS

- 6.8. The previous reasons for refusal were primarily related to the internal living conditions of the dwellings.
- 6.9. The Decision Notice stated that the planning application was refused on the following grounds:

By reason of the limited floorspace for each dwelling (below the nationally described space standard), poor levels of natural lighting, lack of facilities for waste storage and collection, lack of amenity space, allocated car parking area and / or cycle storage and general location within a working equestrian yard, the development gives rise to poor living conditions for the occupants of the dwellings contrary to the provisions of Policies D1 and D3 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

- 6.10. As explained in the Introduction, this application has been prepared to address the previous reasons for refusal. We have explained below how each of these issues has been overcome.

Floorspace

- 6.11. The previous application was for two dwellings with a gross internal floor area (GIA) of 34 sqm each. This is below the minimum standards in the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) which require a GIA of 37sqm for a one person one bed dwelling.
- 6.12. It is now proposed to convert both units into a one bed dwelling. The proposed GIA is 64 sqm. This far exceeds the NDSS requirements for a one person 1 bed dwelling (37 sqm), or even a person 2 bed single storey dwelling (50 Sqm).

Natural Light

- 6.13. The units in the previous application were served by a window to the kitchen/living area but there were no windows in the bedrooms.
- 6.14. The proposed layout has removed the previous bedrooms to create a larger open plan living area. As well as the existing kitchen window, this area is served by an additional window in the side elevation and two new rooflights. The new bedroom which was previously a kitchen/living area is served by the existing window. All habitable rooms are therefore served by windows which will provide a good level of natural light. The bathroom and ensuite are served by obscure glazed windows.

Adjoining Equestrian Business

- 6.15. The Officers Report for the previous application stated that there would be noise and disturbance from the surrounding stable yard business.

- 6.16. A Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken by HA Acoustics. The assessment found that noise levels in the yard are no higher than any residential area, and the internal noise levels within the proposed development are predicted to meet the guideline noise criteria contained in BS 8233:2014, provided the identified appropriate minimum specified glazing, ventilation and façade materials are installed to a good manner of workmanship.

External Amenity Space

- 6.17. There was no designated amenity space or drying area identified on the plans for the previous application.
- 6.18. It is proposed to erect a wall to the front of the dwelling to provide an area of outside amenity space. There is also sufficient space in this area for external drying.

PARKING

- 6.19. The Officers Report for the previous application stated that there was no allocated parking or cycle parking.
- 6.20. The Proposed Site Plan shows an allocated parking space within the courtyard, and secure cycle storage within the outbuilding opposite the dwelling.

REFUSE

- 6.21. Refuse storage was not identified in the previous application.
- 6.22. The proposed Site Plan shows that refuse will be stored to the rear of the cycle store, and this can be accessed from the amenity area.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The proposal is for the *“conversion of 4 stables to a one bed dwelling, formation of amenity space, and provision of car parking, cycle storage, and bin storage (development partially carried out).”*
- 7.2. The site is within the Green Belt, but as acknowledged in the Officers Report for the previous application, the proposal meets on of the exceptions to inappropriate development in NPPF Paragraph 154, relating to the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 7.3. The proposal has addressed the previous reasons for refusal relating to living conditions. The floorspace far exceeds the NDDS, all habitable rooms are served by windows, and an amenity area has been provided at the front of the dwelling. The Noise impact Assessment confirms that noise levels in the yard are no higher than any residential area, and the internal noise levels within the proposed development are predicted to meet the guideline noise criteria contained in BS 8233:2014.
- 7.4. A designated parking space has been provided within the courtyard, and there is secure cycle storage within the outbuilding opposite the dwelling.
- 7.5. Refuse will be stored to the rear of the cycle store, and this can be accessed from the amenity area.
- 7.6. We therefore commend these proposals to the Council and request that planning permission is granted.

THE OLD BARN
WELWYN EQUESTRIAN CENTRE