

# Planning Statement

## Alterations to garage to create ancillary workshop, office, gym and residential accommodation

### Palace House Barn, Much Hadham

#### Introduction

Rural Solutions is instructed to submit a Full planning application on behalf of Emma Logan (hereafter referred to as the 'applicant') to seek the alteration of an existing barn (currently in use as a garage) to create ancillary gym, office, and residential accommodation. The proposal does not include any extensions or material change of use (the building is already in ancillary residential use) and, therefore the application will solely relate to fenestration alterations and operational development onsite.

#### Site Description and History

The application site is located south of Winding Hill, Much Hadham. Access onto site is shared with the main dwelling via Winding Hill. The barn is located 130 metres away from the Grade II\* Listed building of Palace House; the main dwelling associated with the barn. Furthermore, the barn is located within the Much Hadham Conservation Area.

The site is located within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and therefore is not included within an existing settlement boundary. The building has previously been used to store classic cars and most recently gained consent for the "Creation of first floor within garage for domestic storage and provision of workshop and lobby area at ground floor" (application reference: 3/16/0669/HH). This permission was not implemented and has now lapsed.

Planning history listed on East Hertfordshire District Council's website is limited to the following:

- 3/02/1771/FP - change of use of garage to dwelling, extension and alterations. – Refused 12<sup>th</sup> November 2002.
- 3/07/2090/FP - Conversion of an existing outbuilding, with minor extensions and alterations, to a residential annexe for occupation in association with Palace House. – Refused 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007
- 3/16/0669/HH - Creation of first floor within garage for domestic storage purposes and provision of workshop and lobby area at ground floor. – Approved 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016

The application approved in 2016 originally applied the following condition:

"The use of the building that forms the subject of this application shall be used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Palace House, and for no other purpose".

However, the previous owner appealed the decision in order to change the wording of condition 3 as follow:

“The building to which this permission relates shall only be used as a domestic garage and for no other purpose.”

The council had previously accepted that the building should only be used for purposes ancillary to Palace House. The ownership of the site changed seven years ago and the new owner now wishes to seek permission for the ancillary use of the building and reinstate this previously accepted position.

## Proposed Development

The proposed development includes the following:

- The development relates to the operational development internally, to create a first-floor annex space ancillary to Palace House.
- Minor fenestration alterations, to provide windows and doors in keeping with the existing barn and character of the area.

The proposal does not include extensions to the building and all alterations are minimal. The proposed annex space is to be used

- (a) As a home office for the owner, who is now working from home 80% of the time.
- (b) An office for her husband, a writer, who works from home 90% of the time.
- (c) A small gym.
- (d) By the owner’s au pair and partner for ancillary purposes to the main house.

Therefore, the proposal should not be considered a separate planning unit and the applicant is willing to accept a condition restricting the use for solely ancillary purposes.

## Planning Policy

The East Hertfordshire District Council Plan was adopted in October 2018, which comprises the development plan for the authority. The key policies pertaining to the proposed development are as follows:

- Policy GBR2 Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
- Policy HOU11 Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings, Residential Outbuildings and Works Within Residential Curtilages
- Policy HOU13 Residential Annexes
- Policy DES2 Landscape Character
- Policy DES4 Design of Development
- Policy HA1 Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy HA4 Conservation Areas
- Policy HA7 Listed Buildings

Other material considerations include:

- Much Hadham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan – 2014

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) sets out national planning policy for England. National Planning Practice Guidance provides further information on how policies should be interpreted. National policy and guidance are material considerations in any planning decision.

The following key areas of national policy and guidance are of key relevance to this case:

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development.
- Section 4 – Decision-making.
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places.
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

## Key Planning Issues

### Principle of development

The proposed development would alter the existing barn in use as a domestic garage to include a first floor to accommodate an ancillary gym, office and annex accommodation serving the main dwelling of palace house.

Planning consent has previously been provided under reference 3/16/0669/HH for the: “Creation of first floor within garage for domestic storage purposes and provision of workshop and lobby area at ground floor”. This application was conditioned to be ancillary to Palace House. The former owner of Palace House appealed the wording of condition 3 attached to that permission to allow the building to be a domestic garage.

Notwithstanding the changes to the wording of the planning condition, the Council previously considered that the building should be ancillary. Therefore, the proposed development would comply with the original application in this regard. Furthermore, the proposed development does not include any extensions to the existing building and would only constitute internal operational works and amendments to the fenestrations of the building. This would comply with Policy GBR2 and Policy HOU11 of the Local Plan 2018.

Policy HOU13 of the Local Plan 2018 sets out the council’s stance on residential annexes. The policy states the following:

- “(a) the accommodation forms an extension to the main dwelling and is capable of being used as an integral part of the dwelling or forms a separate outbuilding which is close to and well related to and have a clear functional link to the main dwelling;
- (b) the scale of the annexe does not dominate the existing dwelling and is the minimum level of accommodation required to support the needs of the occupant;
- (c) sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling, in accordance with adopted standards, is available and appropriately located in design terms within the curtilage;
- (d) the development accords with Policy HOU11 (Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings, Residential Outbuildings and Works within Residential Curtilages).”

Part a of this policy sets out that the annexe must be in close association with the main dwelling. This position has already been accepted by the Council via the approved application 3/16/0669/HH. The case officer of the previous application stated:

“I nonetheless understand from the applicant’s submission that the building is used ancillary to the main dwelling (Palace House) – the building is used for the storage of classic cars owned by the applicant who resides at Palace House.” Therefore, the building has already been accepted to be in connection with Palace House and this fact has not changed.

Part b of the policy states that the proposed annexe should not dominate the existing dwelling and would have a minimum level of accommodation. The building is not proposed to be increased in size and would be subservient to the existing main dwelling. Furthermore, the accommodation proposed would comply with the governments Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard 2015. The proposal would comply with the policy in this regard.

Part c relates to car parking. The proposal does not include additional parking, however the main house includes significant space to accommodate car parking. The proposal would comply with the policy in this regard.

Part d states that the proposal should accord with Policy HOU11. As stated, the application does not include any extensions to the existing building. The proposal would comply with the policy in this regard.

As evidenced above, the principle of development has already been accepted and therefore the application should be approved without delay.

### **Design and Heritage**

The application site is located within the Much Hadham Conservation Area and Palace House is a Grade II\* listed Building, located 100 metres from the barn. The building itself is not listed. The proposal does not involve any extensions and solely involves internal works, and minor amendments to the barn’s fenestrations.

The southern elevation currently has a large door at the ground floor and a door at first floor level. The proposed design follows these existing openings, replacing them with windows. This would enable more light into the barn, which at ground level would be used as an office. Moreover, this would be in keeping with the character of the building as existing openings would be utilised. Four additional windows are proposed at ground floor level, two on either side of the principal elevation. These windows would be well spaced and be proportionate to existing openings. Furthermore, two small roof lights are proposed within the roof. The southern elevation faces into an open field and can only be glimpsed from the High Street in the winter through well-established trees. The Grade II\* Listed Building to the east would also only experience glimpsed views and the barn is set a significant distance away. Therefore, the proposed amendments would not impact the setting of the listed building or the conservation area.

The western elevation proposes two small windows at first floor level, facing away from the listed building. These windows are proportionate to the existing building and would not impact the setting of the listed building or the conservation area.

The eastern elevation proposes to retain the existing door opening, making minor amendments to include glazing within the door. Furthermore, the first floor proposes two additional windows, which are proportional to the existing barn.

The southern elevation sits against the well-established hedging and trees lining Winding Hill. Due to the proximity to the trees, both light into any proposed windows and the view of such windows from the road will be limited. Three small windows are proposed at ground level and four roof lights are proposed within the roof. As stated, the windows would be small and would not be visible from the street scene.

Therefore, the proposed amendments to the building would be in-keeping with the character of the area and would not impact the setting of the listed building or conservation area. This would comply with policies DES4, HA1, HA4 and HA7 of the Local Plan 2018.

### **Amenity**

The building is a significant distance from other residential properties, therefore the proposed development would not impact other amenities and conforms with policy DES4 of the Local Plan 2018.

### **Conclusion**

The applicant is seeking a modest change to the existing building, where the principle of development has already been accepted for ancillary use to the main building at Palace House.

There are no adverse impacts arising from the proposal that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF, and therefore planning permission should be approved.