PLANNING, DESIGN & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Eastwood House | Old Back Lane, Wiswell, Lancashire BB7 9BS
Replacement of existing domestic outbuildings with a multi-room timber garden building
Revision 08 | 28 October 2026

1. Introduction and proposal

This statement supports a householder planning application for the removal of two adjoining, ageing timber domestic outbuildings and their replacement with one purpose-built timber garden building within the grounds of Eastwood House, Wiswell. The proposal includes minor extensions to the existing concrete slab, local alterations to a low stone retaining wall, removal of a Leylandii hedge, a new access path and steps, and replacement planting.

The replacement building is based on the Tuin Ava 70mm log cabin. It will provide three ancillary spaces: a workshop, a store and a home office. These uses will remain incidental to the enjoyment of Eastwood House as a dwelling; the proposal does not seek an independent residential unit or a separate commercial planning use.

2. Site context and existing development

Eastwood House is a residential property within the Wiswell Conservation Area. The application site is an established domestic garden and driveway setting and lies wholly within the applicant's ownership. Two connected timber structures currently stand alongside the northern boundary, close to the driveway/courtyard. They are weathered and of utilitarian appearance, with an overall plan length of approximately 8.05m and a depth of approximately 3.20m. The existing workshop has eaves of approximately 1.85m and a ridge of approximately 2.40m; the store has eaves of approximately 1.90m and a faceted roof rising to a raised ridge detail at approximately 2.60m.

The existing outbuildings sit on a concrete slab approximately 250mm from the adjacent boundary wall. Mature Leylandii planting screens much of their driveway-facing elevation. A low stone retaining wall defines the planting area in front of the buildings. The neighbouring land to the north lies at a higher level, approximately 1.3m above the slab, with a hedge approximately 1.4m above that land.

The existing store roof is partially visible from Old Back Lane above the stone boundary wall and planting; the adjoining workshop roof is screened from this viewpoint (VP01). From the rear gate on Pendleton Road, the outbuildings are almost entirely screened by the garden wall, planting and an existing greenhouse, with only a small part of the workshop gable end glimpsed behind the greenhouse (PH03). View 2 on sheet PH01, which shows the full workshop gable, is taken from within the garden of Eastwood House, not from Pendleton Road.

3. Description of proposed building

The proposed timber building will follow the established alignment beside the northern boundary and occupy broadly the same position as the existing buildings. It will be modestly larger, with an overall roof envelope of 8,440mm × 3,470mm and a wall footprint of 8,240mm × 3,270mm. The eaves will be approximately 2.30m and the roof ridge approximately 2.70m above the retained slab level. Dimensions are to be read with the submitted scaled plans and the manufacturer's published specification.

The exterior will be constructed in 70mm interlocking spruce logs with a sage-green stain, chosen to match the existing front and rear doors of Eastwood House. Window frames, doors and surrounds will be finished in the same colour as the walls rather than a contrasting colour. The pitched roof will be finished in black straight-edge roofing shingles supplied with the cabin, giving a restrained, dark appearance complementary to the slate tones of the main dwelling.

The entrance will face the driveway/courtyard, with two front windows. The workshop and store rear-facing windows shown on some standard manufacturer illustrations will be omitted, so that the boundary-facing elevation is a solid log wall. Internal spaces will comprise a workshop, store and office as shown on the proposed floor plan.

4. Design approach and visual effect

The design is intentionally simple, low-rise and subordinate to the main house. Rather than introducing a wholly new built element into undeveloped garden space, the proposal consolidates existing storage/workshop accommodation into a single building with consistent materials and a single roof form. Its timber construction respects the informal garden character of the site, while its subdued colour palette reduces visual prominence.

The principal dimensional changes are a ridge approximately 100mm above the existing store maximum (and 300mm above the existing workshop ridge), and eaves approximately 400–450mm above the existing eaves along the length of the building, with the existing faceted store roof replaced by one continuous pitched roof. On the boundary side, the proposed eaves at 2.30m remain below the level of the neighbouring ground plus its hedge (approximately 2.70m above the slab), so the increase in wall height is not read from the neighbouring land. On the courtyard side, the taller elevation is seen in the context of the main house, in a recessive sage-green finish, and is softened at ground level by the replacement cottage-garden planting. The effect should be judged against the existing built form, which it replaces, rather than as a new addition to an

undeveloped part of the garden.

5. Heritage significance and assessment

The Wiswell Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the rural setting, green fields and woodland reaching into the village; brooks and bankside trees; sunken lanes enclosed by stone walls and hedges; historic farm buildings and village ‘folds’; and the locally quarried sandstone that gives the built environment much of its visual consistency. It also identifies tranquillity and biodiversity as elements of the area’s special interest. These features, rather than the appearance of any individual modern garden structure, provide the relevant heritage context for this proposal.

The appraisal’s account of the former Clegg House Farm site refers to the introduction of two modern detached houses, Oakworth and Eastwood House, following the removal of former garages and fencing. Eastwood House is therefore part of the later development history of the village and is not presented as a historic or listed building. Its garden walls, planting and relationship to the established lanes nonetheless contribute to how this part of the conservation area is experienced.

Vicarage House, a Grade II listed building, occupies the plot immediately to the north of Eastwood House. Its associated land adjoins the application site along the northern boundary, which is the boundary beside which the existing outbuildings stand and the replacement building is proposed. The proposal’s effect on the setting of Vicarage House is therefore the principal heritage consideration.

The existing outbuildings are weathered, utilitarian timber structures and have not been identified as fabric contributing positively to the conservation area’s historic significance. The proposal does not alter the fabric of Vicarage House or of any boundary wall shared with it. It consolidates ancillary accommodation in the same established garden location, retains the principal stone boundary wall and the low garden wall except for local access and corner alterations, and introduces a consistent external treatment. Retaining the stone walls is especially relevant in a village where enclosure by sandstone walls is a documented element of special interest.

Setting of Vicarage House. The proposed cabin stands in the existing outbuilding position, approximately 250mm from the boundary wall, with the neighbouring land approximately 1.3m higher and a hedge approximately 1.4m above that. The proposed eaves (2.30m above the slab) sit below the combined ground-and-hedge level (approximately 2.70m above the slab), and the ridge (2.70m) is level with it. From the Vicarage House side the building will therefore present, at most, the upper part of a dark-shingled roof slope seen above or through the hedge, in place of the existing store ridge which already rises to 2.60m. With no rear-facing openings and a solid log wall to the boundary, there is no change to the privacy or enclosure of the listed building’s grounds. The effect on the setting of Vicarage House is assessed as neutral; its significance, which derives from its historic fabric, form and relationship to the village core, is preserved.

Conservation area and public views. The principal potential effects are the slightly larger footprint and roof, the loss of the Leylandii screen, changes to the low wall and planting bed, and glimpsed views from Old Back Lane and Pendleton Road. From Old Back Lane the existing store roof is glimpsed above the boundary wall and planting (VP01). The replacement building has one continuous ridge approximately 100mm above the existing store ridge, so a slightly longer and marginally higher line of dark-shingled roof will be seen above the wall from the point on the lane where the store roof is visible today. From that point, the rest of the ridge is screened by the hedge of Oakworth, the neighbouring property to the south, which runs up the lane, as it screens the existing workshop roof today; an indicative line is shown at VP02. Further up the lane, the high boundary wall of Eastwood House screens the building entirely, so any view is confined to a short stretch of Old Back Lane. From Pendleton Road, the building will remain largely screened by the garden wall, planting and the existing greenhouse, as the existing workshop is today; at most a slightly larger glimpse of its end elevation may be seen behind the greenhouse (PH03). The replacement building remains low-rise, in subdued timber and dark roofing; the retained walls and planting continue to filter views, and replacement garden planting will soften the driveway setting. The additional visibility is limited and does not affect any of the features identified as contributing to the conservation area’s special interest. The effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area is assessed as neutral, and the proposal preserves that character and appearance in accordance with the statutory duty.

6. Neighbouring amenity and boundary relationship

The proposed cabin wall will remain approximately 250mm from the vertical boundary wall; this measurement is to the cabin wall, not to its roof overhang, which projects approximately 100mm into the gap. The neighbouring land is approximately 1.3m higher than the existing slab and its hedge is approximately 1.4m high, together substantially screening the new building when viewed from that side. The section drawing (P07) shows the level and clearance relationship, including the clear space between the walls.

The workshop and store will have no rear-facing windows towards the boundary. The development is for incidental domestic use and does not propose a separate dwelling. Its modest height increase and restrained roof profile will not create unacceptable overlooking or an unduly overbearing impact on neighbouring occupiers.

7. Groundworks, access and landscaping

The existing concrete slab will be retained at its current level. It will be enlarged by approximately 270mm towards the driveway and 390mm at the present workshop gable end (the proposed office end) to support the replacement building. The finished building will cover the enlarged slab. No general raising of the slab or surrounding ground level is proposed.

The low stone garden retaining wall will largely be retained, with local alterations to its corner at that end to accommodate the slab extension. The wall is approximately 300mm high and around 250mm thick. The planting bed between the slab and the low wall is approximately 1m wide at its widest part. Steps will be formed at the wall opening and a short path will lead through the former Leylandii bed to the central entrance. Existing gravel beyond the low wall will remain undisturbed.

The approximately 4m-long Leylandii hedge will be removed outside the bird-nesting season, following a check for any active nests, and the bed replanted with cottage-garden-style planting. The Leylandii stems are below 75mm diameter at 1.5m height and the hedge therefore falls outside the conservation area tree notification requirements. The removal and replacement planting are recorded in the submitted hedge works and photographic document.

8. Ecology and biodiversity

The existing structures are in constant use as a domestic workshop and store, with frequent access throughout the buildings. They are simple timber outbuildings without ceilings or enclosed roof voids. The workshop roof is single-skin timber boarding on exposed rafters, open to the lit interior; the store roof is clear corrugated plastic sheeting on exposed rafters, so the space is light throughout the day. Neither offers the dark, sheltered voids or crevices associated with bat roosts. Photographs of both roof interiors are provided (EC01). No evidence of bats, nesting birds or other protected species has been observed in the buildings during their regular use.

Demolition and replacement will take place on the existing developed footprint, with only modest extensions to the retained slab. The mature trees around the site will be retained, and significant disturbance to their root systems is not anticipated. The Leylandii screen is to be removed outside the bird-nesting season, with the area checked for active nests before works begin. Replacement cottage-garden planting is proposed.

In view of the scale, construction and established domestic use of the structures, a detailed ecological or arboricultural report would be disproportionate. Precautions will nevertheless be taken to avoid disturbing protected species: if any evidence of bats or nesting birds is found before or during works, works in that area will stop and specialist advice will be sought.

9. Planning policy considerations

The proposal has been considered against the design and heritage objectives of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, particularly Key Statement EN5 (Heritage Assets) and policies DMG1 (General Considerations) and DME4 (Protecting Heritage Assets), together with the heritage conservation principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, including Chapter 20 policies HE4, HE5 and HE9 on heritage significance, proportionate assessment and conservation areas, and the statutory duties under sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

These policies require development to respond appropriately to its context and to conserve the significance and character of heritage assets. The scheme is a modest replacement of existing ancillary structures, using sympathetic materials in an established garden location. It preserves the setting of Vicarage House and the character and appearance of the Wiswell Conservation Area, and accords with the policies cited.

10. Conclusion

The proposed development will replace weathered domestic outbuildings with one well-considered, ancillary timber building. It retains the existing development location and slab level, modestly increases the footprint and height, and uses a restrained architectural treatment appropriate to the residential garden and conservation-area setting. The boundary relationship, site levels, planting changes and the setting of the adjacent listed building have been expressly considered. On that basis, the applicant requests that Ribble Valley Borough Council support the proposal.

Supporting information and verification notes

To be read with the submitted location plan, existing and proposed block plans, existing outbuilding plans and elevations (E01–E05), proposed Tuin Ava plans and elevations (P03–P06), groundworks plan (S01), boundary section (P07), hedge works and photographic record, the Old Back Lane viewpoints (VP01–VP02) and roof interior photographs (EC01). Site and existing-building dimensions are owner-measured and stated to the nearest 10–50mm; proposed building dimensions are taken from the manufacturer's published specification. This statement is an owner-prepared proportionate assessment, not a specialist conservation or ecological survey.

Heritage evidence: Ribble Valley Borough Council, Wiswell Conservation Area Appraisal and Wiswell Conservation Area Management Guidance (2005/2006): www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/103/wiswell-conservation-area-appraisal and www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/102/wiswell-conservation-area-management-guidance.

Policy references: Ribble Valley validation checklist (May 2025): www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/planning-buildings/validation-checklist-planning-applications; Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement EN5, policies DMG1 and DME4; National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 20, published 29 September 2026: www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework-chapter-20-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment-he1-10.