

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Schedule 2, Part 7, Class E – Forestry Buildings and Operations

To: Planning Department, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
From: Matt Aitken & Emily Garcés
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Site: Collyhole Wood, Church Lane, Ipstones (Grid Ref: SK 00778 50697)
Date: Fri 26 June 2026

1 Statutory Basis and Confirmation of PD Rights

This Prior Notification seeks approval for the erection of a 20-foot secure forestry storage building at Collyhole Wood under Schedule 2, Part 7, Class E of the GPDO. The building is proposed solely for forestry operations and will provide secure storage for equipment, PPE, materials and safety items required for year-round woodland management.

Class E permits buildings reasonably necessary for forestry, and Collyhole Wood is in active forestry use with permitted development rights established under Article 3(1). Forestry operations undertaken at the site include silvicultural management, thinning, ride maintenance, boundary repairs, invasive vegetation control, deer protection and habitat management. These ongoing activities establish the forestry use of the land independently of any management plan approval process. A Woodland Management Plan has been submitted to the Council and describes the programme of works already being undertaken, but its approval status is not determinative of permitted development rights under Part 7.

Prior Approval is therefore sought under paragraph E.2 for the matters identified within Class E.

2 Functional Need & Forestry Justification

The following operational requirements demonstrate that the proposed forestry storage building is reasonably necessary and proportionate under Part 7, Class E.

2.1 Woodland Management Operations

The woodland is subject to ongoing silvicultural work, thinning, ride maintenance, boundary repairs, invasive vegetation control, deer protection and habitat management. These operations require specialist tools, PPE and materials to be available on site throughout the year.

2.2 Equipment & Materials Required

Secure storage is required for chainsaws, brush-cutters, PPE, hand tools, wheelbarrows, fencing tools, timber stakes, posts, deer fencing rolls, spill kits and small quantities of fuel stored in accordance with HSE/AFAG guidance. Many items are bulky, weather-sensitive or high-value. Regular transport to and from the woodland is impracticable and would reduce operational efficiency.

2.3 Woodland Management Working Parties

Volunteer working parties undertake periodic management tasks under supervision. Multiple operators require separate sets of tools, PPE and safety equipment. Centralised secure storage ensures equipment is available when required and avoids repeated transport of bulky items.

2.4 Secure Storage Requirements

Given the remote location, the value of equipment and the need to store chainsaws and fuels safely, secure steel storage is reasonably necessary. The proposed unit provides durable, weatherproof and high-security accommodation that protects equipment from theft, vandalism and weather damage while ensuring safe availability at the point of work.

2.5 Size & Proportionality

A 20-foot building represents the minimum practical size capable of safely accommodating the equipment, materials and multiple tool sets required for woodland management and working parties. The proposed dimensions reflect operational need rather than future expansion or non-forestry use.

2.6 Storage Use Only

The building will be un-serviced (no electricity, water or drainage) and used solely for forestry storage. No non-forestry use is proposed.

2.7 Indicative Internal Storage Layout

Figure 1 illustrates how the building accommodates long-handled tools, fencing materials, wheelbarrows, spill kits, PPE, and multiple tool sets. The layout demonstrates the operational space requirements underpinning the proposed building size and confirms that a 20-foot unit is the minimum practical solution.

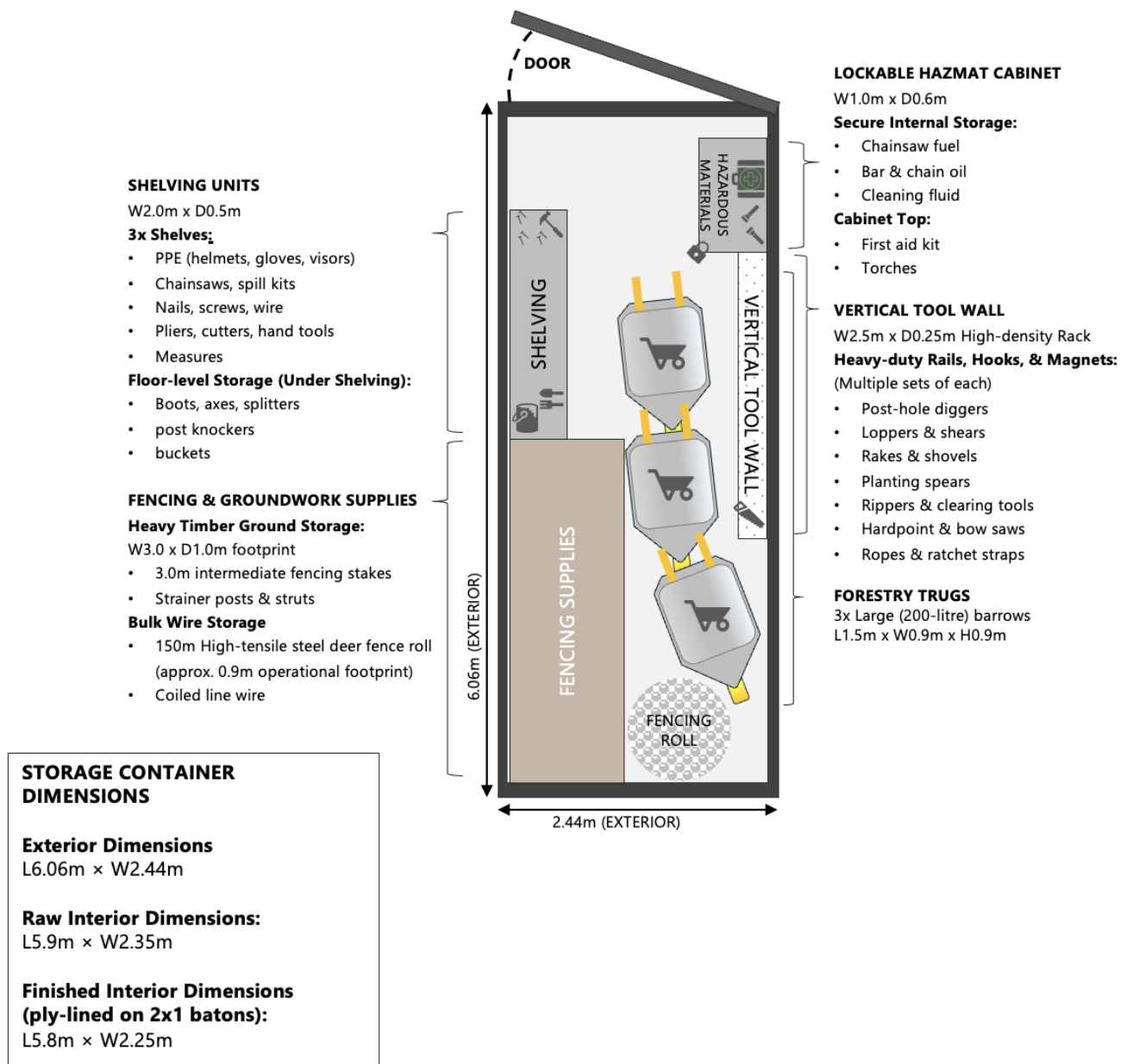


Figure 1 – Indicative Internal Storage Layout

3 Siting, Design and Visual Mitigation

3.1 Siting

The building will be positioned at the woodland entrance on concrete pads placed on the existing surface, avoiding excavation and allowing future removal. It sits 2–3 metres below Church Lane on naturally lower ground, reducing prominence and benefiting from existing roadside vegetation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the structure satisfies the highway constraints of Class E.1(a); Church Lane is an unclassified rural lane, and the development is not situated within 25 metres of a trunk road or a classified road.

3.2 Visibility

The structure is partially visible from Church Lane but set back, below eye level and screened by established trees. Additional native hedge planting (holly-weighted for winter density) will be undertaken during the 2026–27 dormant season and maintained for five years. The building is not visible from any other public rights of way.

3.3 Materials

Structure:	20ft secure steel unit (approx. 6.06m × 2.44m × 2.89m).
External Facing:	Vertical rough-sawn timber cladding in matt charcoal.
Roofing:	Low-profile timber tray with native evergreen moss/sedum blanket.

3.4 Reversibility

With no foundations or service connections, the development is fully reversible and can be removed with minimal disturbance.

3.5 Appearance and Landscape Camouflage

The external appearance of the proposed building has been deliberately designed to reflect its woodland setting and to minimise its visual impact by using appropriate materials, colours and landscaping.

Design Element	Specification & Materials	Planning & Visual Justification
External Cladding	Fully clad on all visible vertical flanks with rough-sawn, treated timber featheredge weatherboarding.	Conceals the underlying steel frame, migrating the structure from an industrial appearance to a traditional, high-quality rural forestry building.
Colour & Finish	Treated with a high-opacity, ultra-matte black / dark charcoal protective timber stain.	The matt charcoal finish has been selected to reduce visual contrast against the surrounding woodland backdrop.
Roof Visual Disruption	Outfitted with a low-profile, non-structural timber tray frame housing a pre-cultivated, low-maintenance native evergreen moss and sedum blanket.	The green roof reduces the visual prominence of the roof when viewed from higher ground.
Soft Landscaping & Screening	Double-staggered native hedge planting consisting of holly, hazel, and hawthorn. Holly (evergreen) will be heavily weighted to ensure winter density.	Supplements existing flora to create a dense, multi-layered visual barrier.

The proposed siting, timber cladding, matt charcoal finish, green roof and supplementary planting have been carefully selected to minimise the visual prominence of the building and integrate it into its woodland setting.

4 Ecological Considerations

The proposal avoids excavation and retains existing vegetation. No external lighting or utilities are proposed, preventing additional illumination and disturbance. Native hedge planting and the green roof provide modest ecological enhancement.

5 GPDO Interpretation & Compliance

The proposed structure has been specified in accordance with the operational parameters of Schedule 2, Part 7, Class E of the GPDO.

Woodland Scale:	The GPDO test of “reasonably necessary for forestry” is based on the nature and scale of the operations being carried out, rather than the acreage of the holding. Active, ongoing management is the determining factor.
Security & Weatherproofing:	Modern forestry requires high-value mechanical tools, fuels and sensitive materials. Secure, weatherproof on-site storage is a standard operational requirement to protect equipment from theft, vandalism, and weather exposure.
Materiality:	The GPDO does not restrict the underlying structural form of a forestry building. What matters is that the external appearance is appropriately managed. The specified vertical timber cladding and ultra-matte dark finish ensure the building integrates into the rural woodland landscape.

6 Attachments

- Site Location Plan (1:2500 @ A3)
- Block Plan (1:200 @ A4)
- Appendix A - Visual Context and Impact Assessment
- Woodland Management Plan v2.2

7 Declaration

The applicants respectfully submit that the proposal satisfies the requirements of Schedule 2, Part 7, Class E of the GPDO. The building is solely for forestry purposes, un-serviced, and designed to minimise visual and environmental effects through careful siting, appearance and landscaping. Prior Approval is therefore sought under paragraph E.2.

8 Appendix A – Visual Context & Impact Assessment

See separate file attachment.