

PLANNING REF : 252601
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Garden Cottage
: Mill Lane, Sindlesham, Berkshire
: RG41 5DF
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Amanda Brierley
DATE SUBMITTED : 23/09/2026

COMMENTS:

I welcome the quality and positive intent of the proposed homes and support appropriate residential development of this land in principle. However, I ask the Council not to approve application 252601 with the access arrangements currently proposed.

1. The existing private spur is not suitable for further intensification. It is narrow and single track, with tight bends, limited visibility and no passing places. In practice, vehicles already encounter stand-offs and reversing manoeuvres.
2. The application should be considered in its wider development context. The field has previously formed part of a much larger housing proposal, while emerging Hatch Farm highway infrastructure near its north-western boundary may offer a safer and more coherent access solution.
3. A north-western access could reduce environmental harm. It may avoid or reduce works affecting the protected Goat Willows covered by TPO-1755-2020 and avoid establishing residential access at the constrained south-eastern end of the field.

My concern is not the principle or design quality of the three homes. It is whether they would establish an unsuitable access arrangement that could influence how the remainder of the field is developed in future.

Supporting observations

- How the spur operates in practice. Mill Lane Spur is a dead-end road of approximately single-vehicle width. Limited visibility and tight bends mean drivers cannot always see an approaching vehicle in time to wait at a suitable point. With no formal passing places, vehicles frequently have to stop or reverse, and there is no separate pedestrian space.
- Existing intensification. Since 2017, my understanding is that the number of dwellings served by the spur has increased from 7 to 15. The applicant's highway response records a width of about 2.8 metres near the site. WBC Highways requested widening to 4.1 metres, but the submitted response does not clearly commit to that work. A small increase in trip numbers does not resolve the underlying physical constraints of the lane.
- Previous and emerging development context. Withdrawn application 201346 proposed 87 homes, including 17 on this land parcel, and considered access from the north-west rather than reliance on Mill Lane Spur. The Hatch Farm Emerging Framework Plan at <https://hatch-farm.co.uk/> now identifies a main access roundabout, spine road and early delivery of the Mill Lane to Hatch Farm Way link. Application 261613, concerning demolition of existing Hatch Farm buildings for future redevelopment, provides further evidence that

the surrounding planning context is changing.

- Need for a coordinated approach. These proposals do not prove that access to this field from Hatch Farm is guaranteed. They do, however, justify the Council examining whether application 252601 should be determined in isolation or whether approval at the south-eastern end could prejudice a safer, coordinated approach from the north-west.

- Protected trees. The proposed access may require the removal of, or works affecting, protected Goat Willows covered by TPO-1755-2020. This impact may be avoidable if access and development are planned from the north-western end of the field.

Suggested next steps

1. Withhold approval in the present form until the applicant has demonstrated safe and suitable access for vehicles and pedestrians.

2. Assess the proposal within the wider Hatch Farm and Garden Village context, including applications 201346 and 261613 and the potential for coordinated access from the north-west.

3. Invite a materially revised or fresh proposal, if necessary, that avoids reliance on Mill Lane Spur and retains the protected trees.

Conclusion. I remain supportive of well-designed development on this land. However, the existing access difficulties are real and already experienced by those using the spur. A coordinated north-western access should be properly examined before permission is granted for an arrangement that relies on the constrained private lane and may affect protected trees.