

**Application for Full Planning Permission for
Alterations to the external elevations of
agricultural building approved under
application 251293**

Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road, Hurst, RG10 OSP

Planning Statement

On behalf of Belcher Farms

Date: October 2026 | Pegasus Ref: P25-1141



Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision
V1	05/10/2026	MR	MR	

All Intellectual Property Rights (including but not limited to copyright) subsisting in or arising out of this document are owned by Pegasus Planning Group Ltd (Pegasus Group) and may not be copied, adapted, disseminated, redistributed, reproduced and/or otherwise used without a written licence. Pegasus Group accepts no liability for any use of this document other than for its original purpose and by the original client except in circumstances where approval for use has been supplied by Pegasus Group in writing. Any queries to be reported to Pegasus Group for clarification. Copyright © Pegasus Planning Group Limited. Use of this document is subject to the Terms & Conditions available @ pegasusgroup.co.uk



Contents.

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Site and Surroundings.....	2
3. Relevant Planning History.....	3
4. The Development Proposals.....	4
5. Planning Policy Framework.....	5
6. Assessment.....	11
7. Conclusions.....	14

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Belcher Farms (“the applicant”) to support a full planning application for external alterations to an existing agricultural building at Hatch Gate Farm. The building was originally approved and implemented under application 251293.

Proposed Development

- 1.2. The application seeks full planning permission for the following development proposal:

“Alterations to the external elevations of agricultural building approved under application 251293”

- 1.3. The proposed development relates to an existing building that was the subject of an application to determine whether prior approval was required in May 2025. The Council determined in June 2025 that prior approval was not required for the development, and the building has since been implemented. The building is used for the storage of fertilizer and farm equipment that is used on the wider agricultural site.
- 1.4. A more detailed description of the development proposals is set out in Section 4 of this Supporting Statement.

The Purpose and Content of the Supporting Statement

- 1.5. This Statement provides a summary overview of the application proposals and identifies the legislative framework within which it should be considered.
- 1.6. **Section 2** provides a description of the site and its surroundings. The relevant planning history is outlined in **Section 3**. A description of the proposals is set out in **Section 4**. The planning policy framework that is applicable to the application is provided in **Section 5**. **Section 6** then provides an assessment of proposals against the relevant policies and guidance and includes reasoned justification for the development that is being proposed. **Section 7** provides a summary and conclusion.

Submitted Plans and Documentation

- 1.7. In addition to this supporting statement, together with the required application forms and fee, the application for planning permission is supported by the following plans:
- P25-1141_001_01 Site Location Plan
 - P25-1141_001_02 Proposed Block Plan
 - P25-1141_DE_001_A_03 Proposed Plans
 - P25-1141_DE_001_A_04 Proposed Elevations

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. Hatch Gate Farm is an established agricultural unit of over 170ha located south of the village of Hurst. The original farmhouse and farm buildings are accessed via Lines Road which includes the primary access to the site; however, the extent of the agricultural unit also includes substantial areas of land to the east of Davis Street and south of Church Hill.
- 2.2. The main agricultural buildings within the site comprise six sheds located within a cattle yard to the south west of the original farm buildings which are primarily used for the accommodation of cattle. The building that is the subject of this application sits adjacent to but outside of the cattle yard, to its north. The building is accessed via an existing track from Dunt Lane to the west.
- 2.3. The site is not subject to any specific landscape or ecological designations and is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. It is not within a Conservation Area, and the closest listed building is Hatch Gate Farm Cottage, located approximately 200m to the north east of the development site.

3. Relevant Planning History

- 3.1. The adjacent cattle yard was originally granted planning permission in September 2015 under application **150544** which granted planning permission for *'Full application for the proposed formation of cattle yard and associated cattle sheds and farm workshop, to be constructed in four phases'*. The application approved the erection of two buildings with the location of three further buildings identified but not considered at this time.
- 3.2. The three further buildings were subsequently approved in May 2016 under applications **160516**, **160517** and **160518**. An application for a further building was submitted under application **181534** and approved in August 2018. The buildings approved under these five applications comprise five cattle sheds and a workshop, all of which are located within the cattle yard.
- 3.3. Application **211634** was approved in July 2021 for a further agricultural building to be located to the west of the cattle yard. This building as approved was primarily designed for lambing, but is also used for the storage of hay, straw and feed at other times of the year. The building has recently been the subject of retrospective planning application **260789** to change the use of the building to Use Class B8 with external alterations and the installation of additional hardstanding. This application was refused in July 2026.
- 3.4. Most relevant to the current application is prior approval application **251293** as it relates to the building that is the subject of this application. It was agreed in June 2025 that prior approval for the erection of this agricultural building for storage was not required.

4. The Development Proposals

- 4.1. The proposed development comprises external alterations to the building that was the subject of application **251293**. Under that application, the building was set out on the submitted plans to be open on all four sides, however, this does not offer protection from the elements in adverse weather conditions. It also presents a security risk; in particular, the farm equipment stored is valuable, and needs to be
- 4.2. As such, the applicants are proposing to enclose the building on all four sides in order to ensure adequate protection of the fertilizer and farm equipment of the items stored in the building, and to ensure they are securely stored. The four open elevations will therefore be enclosed with green profile metal sheeting, with a concrete slab at the bottom. Roller shutter doors and pedestrian doors will be included to three of the elevations for access.
- 4.3. For clarity, the development comprises works to the existing building only. The building is not proposed to be enlarged in any way, and it will remain within its lawful agricultural use for the storage of fertilizer and farm equipment that is used on the wider agricultural site.

5. Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1. This section identifies the key relevant planning matters contained within the Development Plan and other material planning considerations pertinent to the determination of the planning application.
- 5.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The current adopted Development Plan for Wokingham relevant to the site consists of the Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014).
- 5.3. The Council has been preparing a Local Plan Update which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in February 2025. Part 1 examination hearings took place in November 2025 with Part 2 hearings in March 2026. Following the conclusion of the hearings, the Inspectors wrote to the Council in August 2026 recommended a number of main modifications.
- 5.4. It is therefore likely that some of the policies within the Local Plan Update can now be given moderate weight where these have been examined and have been required not to require modifications. As such, reference will be made to the policies of the Local Plan Update alongside the current Development Plan Policies where this is considered relevant.
- 5.5. It is also relevant that new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on 17th August 2026, replacing the previous version of the NPPF that was published in December 2024, and now contains both plan-making and decision-making policies. Plan-making policies are only to be taking into account in the preparation of a development plan, however the national decision-making policies are a material consideration in all planning decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the Development Plan.
- 5.6. Annex A of the NPPF confirms that development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in the Framework should be given very limited weight, the only exception being where they have been examined and adopted or made against the new NPPF. As such the national decision-making policies of the NPPF are now an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.7. The site is within the parish of St Nicholas Hurst, which does not have a made or emerging Neighbourhood Plan that would be material to the assessment of the development.
- 5.8. The policies and sections of the adopted and emerging Development Plan documents and the NPPF that are considered relevant to the development are set out below.

Core Strategy

- 5.9. The Core Strategy was adopted in January 2010 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for Wokingham until 2026. It contains the spatial vision and policies to promote sustainable development in the Borough and guide planning decisions.
- 5.10. From the policies map that sits alongside the Core Strategy it can be seen that the application site lies outside the settlement boundary. The site is not allocated for residential or any other form of development. It is therefore regarded as 'countryside' in planning policy terms.
- 5.11. The policies map also shows that the site is not located within a Conservation Area, and there are no landscape, ecology or other heritage designations that directly affect the site. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (the zone with the lowest probability of flooding).
- 5.12. **Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development)** sets a number of over-arching principles regarding development proposals in the Borough. Planning Permission will be granted for development proposals that:
- *Maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.*
 - *Ensure the provision of adequate drainage.*
 - *Avoid areas of best and most versatile agricultural land.*
 - *Avoid areas where pollution (including noise) may impact the amenity of future occupants.*
 - *Avoid increasing (and where possible reduce) risks of or from all forms of flooding (including groundwater).*
 - *Provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes.*
 - *Demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6.*
- 5.13. The supporting text to the policy highlights that development should enhance the overall sustainability of the area through minimising impact on the environment. It is important that proposals do not harm this or adversely affect the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors.
- 5.14. **Policy CP3 (General Principles of Development)** sets a number of general principles for development which proposals are expected to follow. The following list sets out those considered relevant to the development. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- *Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.*
- *Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme.*
- *Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.*
- *Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for complementary facilities and uses.*
- *Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and places themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping.*
- *Provide for a framework of open space in secure community use achieving at least 4.65ha/1,000 population provision together with recreational/sporting facilities in addition to private amenity space.*

5.15. **Policy CP11 (Proposals outside Development Limits)** states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside the development limits will not normally be permitted. A list of exceptions is given, of which the following are relevant to the proposals:

'1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the Borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation if, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and

2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)

5.16. The MDD was adopted in February 2014, building on the WCS and including more detailed policies for development in the Borough. The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this application.

5.17. **Policy TB21 (Landscape Character)** states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

Emerging Local Plan Update

5.18. **Draft Policy SS2 (Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy)** includes descriptions of the type of development expected within of all four tiers of the settlement hierarchy (Major

Settlement, Modest Settlement, Minor Settlement and Countryside). In respect of Countryside, it is stated:

“The countryside is defined as the area beyond the settlements defined in the settlement hierarchy. Except for the specific allocations identified in this plan, the countryside is not a location where additional development is planned, although limited types of development to support local needs and the rural economy will be supported in accordance with Policy H4 and Policy H5.”

5.19. Policies H4 and H5 relate to residential development and are not relevant to this proposal.

5.20. **Draft Policy SS5 (Development in the Countryside)** sets out that the countryside will be recognised for its intrinsic character and beauty, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, in accordance with national policy. Development proposals in the countryside will in general only be supported for certain types of development which include:

“c) Development which supports the rural economy and equestrian uses in accordance with Policy ER3: Supporting the rural economy and Policy DH7: Equestrian Development.”

f) The replacement, extension or alteration (including sub-division) of existing buildings of permanent and substantial construction, and which do not lead to disproportionate increases in scale, form or footprint beyond the original building;

h) Agricultural and forestry development that is demonstrated to be reasonable and proportionate to the need

5.21. All development proposals in the countryside must take a landscape-led approach to development in accordance with Policy NE5: Landscape and design and, where applicable:

“a) Contribute to and enhance the local, natural and historic environment;

b) Be of a scale, nature and location within the countryside that is appropriate with regard to its use;

c) Be sited and designed to minimise visual impact;

d) Not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements either individually or cumulatively;

e) Not lead to isolated new dwellings;

f) Not lead to the need for additional new buildings;

g) Maximise opportunities to make the location more sustainable;

h) Have no unacceptable adverse impacts on highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity; and

i) Maximise opportunities to improve public access to the countryside.

- 5.22. **Draft Policy NE5 (Landscape and Design)** states that development proposals will be supported where they adopt a landscape led approach and should respond to the distinctive characters set out in the Landscape Character Assessments, which provide an understanding of valued characteristics, features and quality of local landscape character areas.

NPPF

- 5.23. **Policy S3 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)** states that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which means that outside settlements, Policy S5 should be applied and in all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

- 5.24. **Policy S5 (Principle of development outside settlements)** states that only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, which should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies within the Framework. The list of developments within Policy S5 includes development for agriculture.

- 5.25. Policy S5 also confirms that:

"In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances."

- 5.26. Policy DP3 (Key principles for well-designed places) states:

"1. Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3."

- 5.27. The policy also includes a list of design principles. It confirms that development proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of the policy (above) or any of the relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2.

- 5.28. **Policy P3 (Living Conditions and Pollution)** sets out that development proposals should not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site. Adverse impacts of this nature should be avoided where possible, or else mitigated to an acceptable degree
- 5.29. **Policy N2 (Improving the Natural Environment)** states that ***"If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused."***
- 5.30. Policy N4 also confirms that, other than in exceptional circumstances, development in Protected Landscapes should be refused. Protected Landscapes are National Parks, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broad and National Landscapes in England. The site is not located within a protected landscape.
- 5.31. Returning to Policy S5 in order to finalise this section, the NPPF policies that explicitly state that proposals should be refused in specific circumstances will be relevant to the consideration of the application. The relevant NPPF policies highlighted above that contain this stipulation are Policies DP3 and N2 and HE6. Policy N4 does not apply to the proposal as the site is not within a defined Protected Landscape. None of the other NPPF policies that contain this stipulation are relevant to the proposals.

6. Assessment

- 6.1. This section of the Planning Statement sets out the main planning considerations for this application. The main issues for consideration are considered to be the principle of the development in the countryside and the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area and the landscape, together with its effects in respect of ecology, heritage and residential amenity. As the building will not be extended it will not have any flood risk or drainage impacts.

Principle of the Development

- 6.2. The application proposes development involving alternations to an existing agricultural building which will offer greater security and protection from adverse weather for the farm equipment and fertilizer that is stored within the building. No other development or change of use is proposed; the building will remain within the lawful agricultural use of the wider site.
- 6.3. The starting point for all development proposals is now an assessment against the national decision-making policies of the NPPF. In respect of the principle of the development, Policy S5 relates to development proposals that are located on sites outside settlements, but not within the Green Belt, and as such applies to the application site. This confirms that development for agricultural purposes is acceptable in the countryside. As such, the starting point for any assessment is that the proposed development should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.
- 6.4. In respect of the development plan, it is considered that development on an existing agricultural business contributes to an existing rural enterprise and as such complies with Policy CP11. With regards to the emerging Development Plan, Policy SS5 is not included within the letter from the Inspectors as a policy that requires significant modification and as such can be given moderate weight in the context of this proposal. The development meets three forms of development (c, f and h) that are supported by the policy in that it supports the rural economy, it involves an alteration to an existing building, and it is agricultural development for which the need has been established through the original development of the building.
- 6.5. With regard to Annex A of the NPPF there may be elements of these policies that are not consistent with the NPPF, however this is not a matter for this application to consider as allowing alterations to an existing agricultural building is consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.6. As such, the development is considered acceptable via NPPF Policy S5, Core Strategy Policy CP11 and Emerging Local Plan Update Policy SS5. In accordance with Policy S5 it should therefore be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies of the Framework. The remainder of this statement will therefore consider whether this is the case.

Impact on the Character of the Area and Landscape

- 6.7. Core Strategy Policy CP1 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that maintain and enhance the quality of the environment, and emerging Policy NE5 states that development should be of a scale, nature and location within the countryside that is appropriate with regard to its use. NPPF Policy DP3 requires development proposals to respond to their context so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings.
- 6.8. In respect of the proposals, the development would not result in any enlargement to the building, and it will remain within its current agricultural use. As such it would have no adverse impact on the quality of the environment and will remain of a scale and nature and in a location within the countryside that is appropriate to its use. The materials to be used will be similar to those used on nearby agricultural buildings within the wider Hatch Gate Farm site, and as such the appearance of the building will be in keeping with the character of the areas and integrate with its surroundings.
- 6.9. The development will have no impact on the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape and would comply with Policy TB21.
- 6.10. As set out, NPPF Policy DP3 directs refusal of an application if the proposals conflict with Paragraph 1 of the policy or the relevant principles of Paragraph 2. The development complies with Paragraph and does not conflict with any of the principles within Paragraph 2. As such, there is no harm to weigh against the development in the planning balance in respect of its impact on the character of the area or the landscape.

Residential Amenity

- 6.11. As the development would not enlarge the building beyond its existing footprint or increase its height, it would not result in any adverse impacts on residential amenity through a loss of light. Although the applicant is not aware of any issues in this regard, it would in fact improve the relationship between the building and neighbouring residential properties by reducing the potential for light spill and pollution. As such the development accords with Core Strategy Policy CP3 and NPPF Policy P3, and there is no harm to weigh in the planning balance in this regard.

Ecological Impacts and BNG

- 6.12. The development in comprising alterations to an existing building will not result in any ecological impacts. This is a modern building constructed in 2025 and does not contain any features that could be used as habitat. The development is therefore in accordance with NPPF Policy N2 and there is no harm to weigh in the planning balance in this regard.
- 6.13. As there is no on-site habitat, no habitat has been impacted by the proposed development, and Biodiversity Net Gain is not required.

Heritage Impacts

- 6.14. Although the site is within relatively close proximity to listed buildings to the east and west, as the building is existing and will not be extended, it is not considered that the development would result in any impact on their setting. The site is not within a Conservation Area.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The application seeks planning permission for external alterations to an existing agricultural building at Hatch Gate Farm involving the enclosure of the open sides building on all four sides. This is proposed to ensure adequate protection of the fertilizer and farm equipment of the items stored in the building, and for security reasons.
- 7.2. This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development complies with the relevant policies of the adopted development plan or the emerging Local Plan Update. Furthermore, it is not contrary to any policy of the NPPF.
- 7.3. In considering the planning balance, the new NPPF is tilted further in favour of the grant of planning permission. Policy S3 confers a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.4. Policy S5(1)(a) confirms that development for agriculture is appropriate outside the settlement boundary and as such should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.
- 7.5. Policy S5(2) confirms that the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.
- 7.6. In respect of this, the only relevant NPPF policies that mandate refusal of an application as a result of non-compliance are Policies DP3 and N2. The development is in line with both of these policies and as such there is **not** a situation where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.
- 7.7. Although the benefits of the development will be to the farm only, there are **no** adverse impacts that result in any harm to weigh against the development. As such, the benefits of the development are not substantially outweighed by adverse effects, and the proposals represent sustainable development in the context of the NPPF Policy S5, in which case planning permission should be granted.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Cirencester

33 Sheep Street, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, GL7 1RQ
T 01285 641717
E Cirencester@pegasusgroup.co.uk
Offices throughout the UK

Expertly Done.

DESIGN | ECONOMICS | ENVIRONMENT | HERITAGE | LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Pegasus Group is a trading name of Pegasus Planning Group Limited (07277000) registered in England and Wales.

Registered office: 33 Sheep Street, Cirencester, GL7 1RQ
We are ISO certified 9001, 14001, 45001



[Pegasus_Group](#)



[pegasusgroup](#)



[Pegasus_Group](#)

PEGASUSGROUP.CO.UK