

PLANNING REF : 261825
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Appletree Cottage
: Tag Lane, Hare Hatch, Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 9ST
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Brendan Losgty
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/09/2026

COMMENTS:

Comments on the WBC Pre Application Advice Response Letter 17th June 2026

1. No public consultation was ever carried out by the applicants, and no statement of community involvement was submitted with the application.
2. The proposal and background information seems to now differ from the final application. The property proposed in the application now seems to have grown in size and changed position from that shown in the PAA. I understand change of use is still required from agricultural to residential. Contrary to your PAA comments the land outside of red area was NOT in use as a horticultural nursery. There is no site evidence or records of such use. Both applications 021752 & 170445 were rejected, the latter application was after appeal in July 20 17. Both applications were for single storey dwellings, and both were much smaller in size than the proposed. They were rejected then on the grounds that they were in Green Belt, they were outside of settlement limits, they would have a negative impact on the character of the area and an impact on the ecology and biodiversity of the area. The current proposal for a considerably larger property is still in Green Belt, it is still outside settlement limits, it would have an even greater impact on the character of the area and on the ecology and biodiversity of the area. The arguments for the rejection at appeal in 2017 are now more relevant. (see Appeal response comments below).
3. The NPPF presumption is in favour of sustainable development to meet the needs of the country and more so of the Borough. The spirit and intent of the NPPF clearly does not consider there to be a shortage of 3 storey 6-bedroom 7-bathroom properties all complete with walk in wardrobes a sauna and cinema rooms. The NPPF is concerned with the provision of affordable 1,2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties for the average family. NPPF does not detail and is not intended to support or justify the housing needs of the multi-millionaires. The current glut of empty residential property in central London demonstrates the consequences of building non affordable properties.
4. CP12 states planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The previous application rejections were justified as being harmful to the Green Belt. Multimillionaire properties are surely not defined as being special circumstances by WBC.
 - a. Only a small part of this plot is Grey Belt
 - b. There is no proof provided of a shortage of mansion size 6-bedroom 7 bathroom properties identified in this area.
- c. The development of this size and ratio to the plot is not in a sustainable location.
- d. The Golden rules do not apply in this case as it is not a major multiple housing development.
5. The development would destroy the only ecological and biodiversity corridor on Blakes Lane
6. Contrary to your PAA comment only a very small proportion of this

plot is zoned as Grey Belt. Contrary to your PAA comment there is no large area of hardstanding, the existing semi stoned area being a short vehicular access to the polytunnel and most of the plot is still zoned as agricultural. The whole site CANNOT be considered as Grey Belt land. This part of Blakes Lane, with one exception, consists of single and two storey properties with many areas of Green Belt in-between creating a spacing most identifiable as rural. Infilling of these Green Belt zones will remove the character of the area and create an urban street view which will destroy the rural Green Belt identity of this part of the Hare Hatch hamlet.

7. There is no demonstrable unmet need for this type of development, and I challenge the WBC to prove their case on this matter. We do not have a plethora of homeless multimillionaires living rough in their Bentleys in this area or having to house share with other multi-millionaire families.

8. The spirit of the term "Self-Build" is for members of the local community who have grown up in the (Wargrave) area to be given the opportunity to remain in the locality. It is bad faith for WBC to facilitate developers to misuse this term for the purposes of a gross profit of a speculative developer to take a tax-free advantage of a Capital Gains loophole that only exists in this country.

9. It is highly unlikely multimillionaires will use the one day a week public transport or commute by walking or by cycle. Again, this is a point of consideration more for your average family that WBC have an obligation to prioritize. This property would never be occupied by your average Wargrave or Twyford family.

10. The size and height of the property proposed is considerably greater than, and wholly disproportionate to, the combined existing structures on the site and is totally inappropriate. It has already and will further change the ecology and biodiversity of the site and will have a substantial impact visually on the locality. Contrary to your PAA comment it cannot possibly be regarded as affordable housing under the rural exception sites rule. Previous historic planning

decisions strongly believed it would undermine the intent of CP11 which is why both were rejected. How can WBC possibly now regard such a larger size three storey development as not undermine the intent of the policy CP11?

11. NPPF seeks to avoid new isolated homes (of this magnitude) for a reason. I contest that this building should not be made an exception as it doesn't meet any of the criteria and it certainly is NOT of exceptional design. The Boroughs lack of a 5-year housing land supply does not justify now viewing this development as a benefit of

providing an affordable home. WBC should be focused upon the Borough meeting the true housing need and not meeting a developer's exceptional tax-free profit.

12. I would contest the WBC statement that a development of this magnitude is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The present shortfall of typical affordable family size properties in this part of the borough does not "tilt the balance" towards approving this multi-million-pound development as you claim.

13. This area is predominately rural with low density development and high-density woodland. Destroying the large area of high canopied trees and mature vegetation for such an indiscreet development will not enhance the natural or local environment and shows a complete

disregard for the preservation of the character, appearance and

biodiversity of the Green Belt in this area.

14. The property proposed which frequently is referred to in the application as "modest" is neither modest in size nor appearance and greatly exceeds all the other properties in the immediate area. Park Gate, Merchiston, Glebe House, Dane Croft, Elmfield, Yew Tree House, Oak Cottage, April Cottage, Spring Cottage, Jessamine Cottage and Appletree Cottage will not match the scale or the ratio to plot of this development. It is of Trumpian proportions and would be the largest of all its neighbours and therefore cannot claim to "not have an adverse impact on the neighbouring properties".

15. The ecology of this area has already been impacted severely by the activities of March 2026. No regard was shown for protected species and as such there can now be no biodiversity gain with this development.

16. I have made it clear that the drainage solution proposed within the planning application is wholly unacceptable and legal action will be taken against all parties involved in the design, approval, construction and implementation of the current proposal.

Conclusion against the Pre Planning Advice

This development will not meet the current needs of WBC housing. It will not be an affordable home. It will not improve the biodiversity of the area. It does not tilt the balance in any National or local Framework. It has already had a damaging effect on the biodiversity of the local Green Belt. It now entirely contradicts historic decisions by both WBC and The Appeals Inspectorate. It will be wholly

disproportionate in size and scale to other properties in the area. It will have a detrimental visual effect on the local landscape, the street view and the community all are opposed to such a magnitude of a development taking place. WBC or the planning committee should not feel pressurized or coerced by any developer from outside this area into approving this application because of their continual failure to construct a viable Housing plan to meet the needs of the local community.

Comments on the Applicants Wargrave National Planning Policy Framework Addendum August 2026 NPFF recently added to the application documents

2.4 Policy GB6 states that development in the Green Belt is appropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7. This property does not fall within the categories. The updated definition of grey belt includes previously developed land and/or other Green Belt land which does not strongly contribute to any of Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d) in policy GB2. --

RESPONSE: This land clearly was a vital part of the Green Belt acting as the only protective corridor on Blakes Lane.

The purposes concern unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, the merging of neighbouring towns, and the setting and special character of historic towns. -- RESPONSE: I believe this also includes rural areas that would have their fundamental characteristics changed by

allowing sprawling to take place.

2.6 Policy GB7(1)(g) provides that development on grey belt land is not inappropriate where four requirements are satisfied:

(a) the development would use grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area; --

RESPONSE: This would clearly undermine the Green belt corridor as mentioned above.

With regard to items (b) (c) (d) and as stated above there is no evidenced unmet need for the multimillion-pound development proposed; not to be confused with affordable family size homes.

2.9 Policy S5(5) establishes the decision-making balance once development in the Green Belt is found not to be inappropriate under policy GB7. In that circumstance, permission should be granted unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies as a whole. --- RESPONSE: This would not benefit any of the local community as it is not a family size affordable home. Only the developer and landowner would be the beneficiaries and that is not the intent of this policy.

H07 Annex A Relevance to the application

Proportionate assessment of sustainable location and movement.

Context-led, high-quality design and placemaking.

Substantial weight to homes meeting evidenced accommodation needs.

-- RESPONSE: Again this is not a family size affordable home but a multi-millionaire mansion.

Grey Belt Status

3.1 The primary national policy route is policy GB7(1)(g). The Council's pre-application response of 17 June 2026 accepted that the site qualified as grey belt and that residential development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt. The August 2026 NPPF reinforces that conclusion. -- RESPONSE: This site is not all Grey Belt and our local Green Belt areas should not be the collateral damage for WBC failure to produce a housing plan.

3.2 The site contains lawful built form, extensive hardstanding and a lawful storage use associated with a nursery business.-- RESPONSE: This is only a small part of the site and cannot now be generalised applying to the whole site.

Conclusion on Grey Belt

The site does not contribute strongly to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d). It therefore falls squarely within the August 2026 NPPF

definition of grey belt. This conclusion does not depend solely upon whether every part of the red-line site falls within the definition of previously developed land; the site qualifies through its weak contribution to the relevant Green Belt purposes in any event. --

RESPONSE: I strongly contest this. The land was an important ecological corridor that has been vandalised so the developer can improve his chances in getting WBC to ignore its Green Belt function and status.

Evidenced Unmet Housing Need

3.15 The site is therefore suitably located for the modest development proposed. -- RESPONSE: There is absolutely no proof of an unmet housing need for properties of this magnitude except in the imagination of the author.

Conclusion Under Policies GB6 and GB7

3.17 All applicable elements of policy GB7(1)(g) are met. The proposal is therefore not inappropriate development, should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt and is not required to demonstrate very special circumstances. This confirms and strengthens the conclusion reached in the Planning Statement and in the Council's pre-application advice.-- RESPONSE: This is wholly offensive following the actions on this land in March 2026 to pre-sanitise the site in advance of an application.

5.1 The August 2026 NPPF materially strengthens the policy support for this application. The Council has already accepted in pre-application advice that the site is grey belt and that residential development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt. -- RESPONSE: Have WBC now the power to override what was once subject to local public opinion by bypassing "change of use applications"?

5.6 There would be no unacceptable landscape or character harm. The proposal is for a single, detailed and landscape-led dwelling, positioned between existing homes, retaining important trees and substantial boundary vegetation. The Council's pre-application assessment did not identify the scale of development as out of character with the townscape or landscape. -- RESPONSE: There would be considerable character harm to the local area as is the opinion of all the neighbours who are objecting to a development of this magnitude in this location.

5.7 There would be no unacceptable effect on highway safety, residential amenity, heritage, ecology, trees or drainage. -- RESPONSE: Trees destroyed, ecology destroyed, character and heritage of the area to be destroyed and a drainage plan that is fundamentally flawed.

5.8 No adverse effect, individually or cumulatively, substantially outweighs the benefits. -- RESPONSE: Adverse effects on the collateral damage to the Green Belt, the character of the area and the adverse effect to my paddock of a substantial amount of flooding outweighs the profit of a developer and land owner.

5.10 The Council has already accepted that the site is grey belt, that residential development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt and that the scale of development is not out of character with the townscape or landscape. The submitted technical evidence identifies no unacceptable impact which would justify refusal. A decision to refuse would therefore require a clear and evidenced explanation of why the Council has departed from its pre-application conclusions, which national decision-making policy requiring refusal is engaged, or which adverse effects substantially outweigh the identified benefits. No such basis is apparent. -- RESPONSE: This statement by the author gives me grave cause for concern that WBC

have already approved this development without allowing due public process. I now strongly demand this application be put before the planning committee as a result.

Appeal Decision on Application 170445 on this site for a much smaller property that would have had less impact than the current proposal in Application 261825

I would now ask that the following comments from A J Steen, the Inspector appointed to consider the appeal of 2017, be re-read and taken into consideration in the deliberations of this application. What has changed for these valid reasons for refusal to now be ignored or regarded as inadmissible or inappropriate with regard to the current application?

Site visit made on 6 February 2018
by AJ Steen BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
Decision date: 6 March 2018

Reasons for refusal
Inappropriate development

3. The proposal would replace the existing buildings on the land adjacent to Merchiston that are now vacant with a bungalow that would include a basement. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) confirms that new buildings should be considered inappropriate within the Green Belt with a number of exceptions, including the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites whether redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development. The Framework confirms that previously developed land includes land which is occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land, but excludes land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings.

6. Therefore, from the evidence submitted, I conclude that the site was last used for storage associated with a horticultural nursery which, in planning terms, is an agricultural use the. For these reasons, I conclude that these buildings do not fall within definition of previously developed land as set out in the Framework and, consequently, would not fall within the exception to inappropriate development set out above.

9. For these reasons, the greater bulk and size of the proposed dwelling would harm the openness of the Green Belt in this location. As such, even if I am wrong as to the lawful use of the site, it would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

13. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would conflict with Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the CS and Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan that seek to maintain the quality of the environment and not have a detrimental impact on the countryside.

15. I do not consider that the limited information contained within the Ecological Assessment is insufficient to demonstrate the proposed development would not have some effect on reptiles. No information has been provided as to potential mitigation to overcome that concern.

18. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would affect the ecology and biodiversity in the area.

26. In conclusion, I have found that the proposed demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a dwelling would be inappropriate development that harms the openness of the Green Belt, the character and appearance of the countryside, and ecology and biodiversity in the area. I note that this would remove the potential for employment use, with all the comings and goings that may entail, and would provide for the needs of the appellant but I do not consider that these matters are sufficient to overcome the harm that I have found. For these reasons, the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm and any other harm is not clearly outweighed by other considerations sufficient to demonstrate very special circumstances. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy CP12 of the CS, Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan and the Framework that seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.