



PLANNING STATEMENT

Site
Location: Lambs Farm Business Park, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, RG7 1PQ

Proposal: Erection of agricultural store building in association with the existing stable building and additional car parking. (Resubmission with minor amendments to application number 223727).

Applicant: J P Winkworth

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lasseter Downie Planning on behalf of J P Winkworth in support of a full planning application at Lambs Farm Business Park, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield.
- 1.2 The application seeks permission for an agricultural store building associated with the existing stable building, together with additional car parking. It is a resubmission of application 223727 with minor amendments including the statutory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain and the requirement for a Construction Phase Emergency Plan which are included with this application.
- 1.3 The statement considers the proposal against the adopted Wokingham Development Plan and current national policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework published in August 2026. It concludes that the proposal is a modest, functional rural development which is closely related to the established built form of the site.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Lambs Farm Business Park is an established rural and business complex on Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. For development plan purposes the site lies outside defined Development Limits and is therefore treated as countryside.
- 2.2 The submitted location and block plans show the application area within the southern / south-eastern part of the wider operational complex. The proposed store is positioned close to the existing stable building and established hardstanding, and is reached from the existing internal access serving the site.
- 2.3 The immediate context is already characterised by agricultural, equestrian and commercial buildings, parking and circulation areas, with mature landscape features around the wider site. The proposal therefore falls within an established cluster of built development rather than forming an isolated building in open countryside.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for a single-storey agricultural store building in association with the existing stable building and to support the maintenance of land around the business park, with additional car parking.
- 3.2 The floor plan and elevations show a simple rectangular, functional building with a shallow roof, vertically profiled cladding, large access doors and limited window openings. Its form and appearance are characteristic of an agricultural / utility building and appropriate to the existing site context.
- 3.3 The proposed block plan locates the store alongside the existing operational area and shows additional parking, EV charging and new tree planting along the southern edge. The existing site access is retained.

- 3.4 The application is a resubmission of application 223727 and incorporates minor amendments to the earlier proposal to provide more car parking and also includes the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 3.5 The wider planning history is relevant to the principle of limited development at Lambs Farm. A 2017 appeal concerning expansion into more open countryside was dismissed on character and encroachment grounds. By contrast, application 220034 for three business units was approved in 2022, with the Council concluding that development at the eastern end, close to the original buildings, did not amount to excessive encroachment. Those decisions are not determinative, but they confirm the importance of keeping new development closely related to the established built cluster.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The adopted development plan relevant to this application comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014). The Local Plan Update 2023-2040 remains at examination and has not replaced these adopted documents.
- 4.3 Relevant Core Strategy policies are **CP1** (Sustainable Development), **CP3** (General Principles for Development), **CP6** (Managing Travel Demand), **CP7** (Biodiversity) and **CP11** (Proposals outside Development Limits, including countryside).
- 4.4 Relevant MDD policies are **CC01** (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), **CC02** (Development Limits), **CC03** (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping), **CC04** (Sustainable Design and Construction), **CC07** (Parking), **TB21** (Landscape Character) and **TB23** (Biodiversity and Development).
- 4.5 Core Strategy Policy CP11 seeks to protect the countryside and normally restricts development outside Development Limits. Of particular relevance, it supports diverse and sustainable rural enterprises but seeks to avoid excessive encroachment or expansion away from original buildings.
- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 is a significant material consideration. Policy E2 gives substantial weight to the economic and agricultural-modernisation benefits of appropriate development. Policy E4 expressly supports well-designed new rural buildings and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses, while directing proposals towards sites physically well-related to existing development and requiring siting and design to respect their surroundings.
- 4.7 National policies DP3 (well-designed places), TR4 (access and parking) and N2 (the natural environment) are also relevant to the detailed assessment.

5. Planning Assessment

- 5.1 **Principle and countryside.** The proposal is a new building rather than a conversion or replacement and therefore does not fall neatly within every limb of the older wording of CP11. However, the development plan must be read as a whole and current national policy is a material consideration. The August 2026 Framework now gives clear support through E4 to well-designed new rural buildings and to agricultural / land-based business development. The proposed siting, immediately related to the existing stable and operational cluster, also directly addresses CP11's central concern to prevent excessive outward encroachment.
- 5.2 **Relationship with established development.** The store would not extend the developed frontage into the more open western countryside. Its southern / south-eastern position is contained by the existing complex and is consistent with the site-specific approach taken by the Council in application 220034, where limited development close to the established buildings was found not to represent excessive encroachment.
- 5.3 **Design and landscape.** The simple single-storey form, agricultural detailing and limited openings give the building a suitably utilitarian appearance. It would be read in conjunction with the existing stable and surrounding buildings. Proposed tree planting along the southern edge would further soften views and reinforce the landscape framework. The scheme therefore responds positively to CP3, CC03, TB21 and national policies DP3 and N2.
- 5.4 **Parking and access.** No new highway access is proposed. The additional parking is contained within the existing operational area and the block plan also identifies EV charging provision. These arrangements accord with the objective of Policy CC07 and NPPF policy TR4 to integrate parking and access with the design and operational needs of development.
- 5.5 **Amenity and ecology.** The proposed agricultural use is closely associated with the existing stable and is located within an established operational complex. The retained landscape setting and proposed planting provide an appropriate basis for protecting local character and ecological connectivity. The detailed ecological and statutory biodiversity net gain requirements are considered by ESL Ltd and are included as part of this application so will not be repeated here.

6. Planning Balance

- 6.1 The proposal provides practical storage associated with the existing stable and the larger business site, supporting the continued efficient use of an established rural site. It is compactly located alongside existing built development and avoids a separate outward incursion into open countryside.
- 6.2 The building is modest in form and appropriately agricultural in appearance. The use of the established access, provision of additional parking and EV charging, together with new tree planting, allow the development to be accommodated without a material change to the wider rural character of the site.

- 6.3 The 2026 Framework carries particular weight because Policy E4 expressly supports well-designed new buildings and agricultural / land-based development in rural areas where they are physically well-related to existing development. Read alongside the development plan objective of preventing excessive countryside encroachment, the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The application proposes a modest agricultural store associated with the existing stable building and wider business site, together with additional car parking, within the established Lambs Farm complex.
- 7.2 The store is closely related to existing buildings and hardstanding, uses the established access and is designed in a simple agricultural form. Its location avoids the type of outward countryside encroachment and effectively reinstates the previous permission granted under 223727.
- 7.3 The proposal is consistent with the development plan when read as a whole and is strongly supported by the current National Planning Policy Framework, in particular policies E2 and E4. There are no overriding planning harms that would justify withholding permission.
- 7.4 Planning permission should therefore be granted, subject to any necessary and proportionate conditions.