

PLANNING REF : 261796
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 2 Wakefield Cottages
: Bath Road, Hare Hatch, Berkshire
: RG10 9SS
SUBMITTED BY : Mr James Musson
DATE SUBMITTED : 13/08/2026

COMMENTS:

I object to the proposed variation of Conditions 2 and 5.

Objection to Condition 2

The revised plans would not make minor administrative changes. They would authorise a materially larger and different development from that approved in 2022.

The approved scheme provided approximately 4,154 square metres of internal floorspace. The revised proposal provides approximately 5,246 square metres: an increase of approximately 1,092 square metres, or 26.3%.

The revised plans would also:

retain approximately 685 square metres of glasshouse previously approved for demolition;

increase the main garden-centre building from approximately 3,000 to 3,261 square metres;

increase the caf /store from approximately 600 to 934 square metres;

alter the outdoor sales and canopy areas;

retain additional existing structures;

revise servicing arrangements and use the southern access; and

alter the parking and site layout.

Although the principal building would be lower, the changes must be assessed cumulatively. The 2022 scheme relied substantially on reductions in floorspace, footprint and volume, including an approximately 58% reduction in floorspace. The revised proposal would reduce floorspace by only approximately 47.4%.

The Council should therefore assess the revised scheme against the development approved in 2022, not only against the more heavily developed historic site. It should consider the effects of the additional development on:

Green Belt openness;

landscape character and visual impact;

neighbouring amenity;

traffic and vehicle movements;

noise and lighting; and

the extent to which the changes can properly be authorised under Section 73 rather than requiring a fresh application.

I object to the proposed variation of Condition 2 unless the Council carries out a clear comparison between the approved scheme and the revised plans.

Objection to Condition 5

The revised landscaping appears to provide different and potentially weaker mitigation from that approved.

The approved Landscape Strategy included "Carbon Capture Managed Woodland", using *Paulownia tomentosa* for carbon capture, timber or biomass production and landscape screening.

The revised strategy keeps the same title but proposes native trees and shrubs under a different management regime. I do not object to native species in principle, but the Council must establish whether the revised scheme provides equivalent environmental and visual mitigation.

The approved strategy referred to "screening to and from the site". The revised wording appears to provide only "some screening" while allowing "some views into the site". This appears to reduce the screening objective while the amount of development is being increased.

Before varying Condition 5, the Council should assess:

the woodland area, density and distribution;

the balance between trees and shrubs;

expected tree height and canopy cover;

carbon sequestration;

the management and longevity of the planting;

the effectiveness of screening views of the buildings; and

the effect on views from the site towards the surrounding landscape.

The continued use of the phrase "Carbon Capture Managed Woodland" does not, by itself, demonstrate equivalent mitigation. I object to the variation of Condition 5 unless equivalence is demonstrated by tailored evidence.

Allotments and cumulative effects

The revised scheme would reduce the allotment area to accommodate changes to the service track and yard.

The allotments formed part of the community and environmental

benefits of the approved scheme. Their reduction must be considered together with the increased floorspace, retained structures, altered landscaping, reduced screening and revised servicing arrangements.

The Council should assess whether these combined changes alter the overall balance of benefits and impacts. It should also consider the effects of the revised servicing arrangements on landscape, neighbouring amenity, noise, lighting and vehicle movements.

Green Belt and Section 73

I recognise the applicant's reliance on current national planning policy concerning Previously Developed Land and Grey Belt. Nevertheless, the 2022 permission remains the essential baseline because the application seeks to vary that permission.

The fact that the revised proposal may involve less development than existed historically does not establish that it is acceptable. The Council must also consider whether the additional development and reduced or altered mitigation remain acceptable compared with the approved 2022 scheme.

The Council should determine whether the cumulative changes to the approved plans, landscaping, allotments, access, servicing and parking fall within the proper scope of Section 73.

For these reasons, I object to the proposed variations of Conditions 2 and 5. Unless the matters above are satisfactorily resolved, the revised plans and landscaping should not be approved.