

PLANNING REF : 262011
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 2 Coronation Cottages
: Davis Way, Hurst, Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 0TR
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Peter Richardson
DATE SUBMITTED : 30/09/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to object to planning application 262011.

I am not objecting to the established equestrian use of the site, nor to the reasonable replacement or improvement of the existing stables. My objection concerns the scale and cumulative impact of the development now proposed, including the substantially larger replacement building, extensive hardstanding/parking, approximately 9.3m-wide access, recent perimeter enclosure and vegetation removal.

I am also concerned that the applicant relies upon planning permission 182433 (2018) as a precedent when the approved 2018 development was materially different.

1. Application 182433 does not establish a precedent for the current scheme

The current Planning, Design & Access Statement relies upon application 182433, including at sections 3 and 5.20, as evidence that comparable stable development has previously been accepted.

However, the two schemes are materially different.

Application 182433 approved an additional stable building of approximately 55m , while retaining the existing approximately 50m stable.

The current application instead proposes demolition of the existing stable and construction of a single replacement building of approximately 89m , together with substantially different external works including substantial hardstanding/parking and widening of the access.

The 2018 permission is relevant planning history, but it should not be treated as establishing the acceptability of the development now proposed.

2. The 2018 permission did not establish the current 9.3m access

This is particularly significant because the applicant's own 2018 Planning Design & Access Statement expressly stated:

"The existing access into the site would be retained "

It also stated that the development would make best use of the existing access and hardstanding, and that there would be no intensification in use of the existing access.

The current proposal is materially different. The submitted plans show an access approximately 9.3m wide, and the application is expressly described as "part retrospective for access widening".

I request that WBC establishes the following and requests clear justification for any increase:

- the original and current/as-built access widths;
- precisely what access works have already been undertaken;
- whether an approximately 9.3m access is genuinely necessary for this equestrian use;
- whether a substantially narrower access could safely accommodate horse boxes and other legitimate movements;
- and the effects of the widening on vegetation, drainage and the rural appearance of Davis Way.

The fact that an access existed previously does not justify widening it to approximately 9.3m.

3. Substantial increase in the replacement building

The existing stable is approximately 50m , while the proposed replacement is approximately 89m .

This represents an increase of approximately 78% in floor area. The submitted information also indicates an increase in volume from approximately 188m to 347m , approximately 85%.

The current NPPF policy concerning replacement buildings outside settlements requires consideration of whether a replacement is disproportionately larger than the building it replaces.

The applicant describes the proposal as proportionate and emphasises reuse of the existing stable slab. Reuse of part of an existing slab does not in itself demonstrate that an approximately 78% increase in floor area is proportionate.

WBC should expressly assess this increase against current national and local countryside and landscape policies.

4. Hardstanding area increase and unexplained increase from 2 to 6 parking spaces

There is an important apparent discrepancy within the submitted application.

The application information identifies existing/proposed parking associated with 2 cars (together with the horse-box arrangement), whereas the proposed site plan shows:
"Parking for 6 2.5 x 5m spaces incl. 1 disabled."

WBC should require the applicant to explain this discrepancy before determining the application.

If six formal parking spaces are genuinely proposed, the Council should establish:

- why six spaces are required for a five-stable private equestrian development;
- the total area of hardstanding required; this, as proposed, seems substantial and would have a direct impact on the rural landscape
- whether the parking indicates a greater intensity of use than stated elsewhere in the application;
- the proposed surface materials;
- and the resulting landscape and drainage consequences.

The combination of an approximately 9.3m-wide access and an increase

from two indicated car parking spaces to six formal spaces also raises a legitimate question as to whether a greater level of vehicle activity is anticipated at the site. If so, this could result in additional vehicle movements, manoeuvring and associated noise on Davis Way. This is of particular concern given the residential properties along the road and existing on-street parking pressures, of which WBC is already aware.

I therefore request that WBC considers the proposed parking and access arrangements together and establishes the anticipated number and type of vehicle movements associated with the proposed use, including cars, horse boxes, deliveries and servicing.

The Council should be satisfied that the scale of parking and access provision does not represent or facilitate an unjustified intensification of use, with consequent effects on highway conditions and residential amenity.

This is particularly relevant because the applicant's 2018 proposal specifically relied upon the existing access and existing hardstanding.

The current arrangement therefore appears materially different from the development upon which the applicant now seeks to rely as precedent.

5. Cumulative impact on the rural landscape

The development should not be assessed simply as a replacement stable.

The overall physical change comprises:
larger replacement building + substantial increase in
hardstanding/parking + approximately 9.3m access + recent perimeter
fencing + vegetation removal and associated works.

Taken together, these changes risk substantially formalising and enclosing what has historically been an open equestrian/pasture site within the countryside. A fundamental impact on Hurst landscape as outlined below.

Wokingham Borough Council lists A Design for Hurst as adopted village design guidance, that states "that preservation of the open agricultural landscape is vital to the setting of Hurst as a rural parish"

Furthermore, the adopted Hurst Village Design Statement emphasises the importance of preserving the village's rural and green character, open agricultural landscape, rural views, trees and hedgerows.

Additionally, Wokingham's landscape policies (ref MDD Policy TB21 - Landscape Charter) similarly require development to respond appropriately to landscape character and to retain important landscape features.

The cumulative effect of the proposal should therefore be assessed from Davis Way, neighbouring properties and the surrounding rural landscape rather than considering the stable building in isolation.

6. Works already undertaken - access widening and vegetation removal
I am particularly concerned that physical works have already altered the site.

The application itself acknowledges that the access widening is part retrospective.

Vegetation, including trees/bushes, also appears to have been removed in association with works to the entrance and enclosure of the site.

WBC should therefore establish the site's pre-development condition and compare this with its current/as-built condition.

In particular, I would respectfully request that the Council establish:

- what vegetation was removed;
- when it was removed;
- whether it was removed to facilitate the access, fencing or proposed development;
- the original width and character of the entrance;

- what access works have already taken place;
- and whether any restoration or replacement planting is necessary.

The landscape impact should not be assessed on the assumption that vegetation which has already been removed was never present.

This is also relevant to ecology because the submitted ecological material recognises trees, hedgerows and linear vegetation around the site as providing bat foraging and commuting habitat.

7. Recently erected approximately 6ft perimeter fencing

The site has also recently been enclosed by substantial perimeter fencing of approximately 6ft in height.

The applicant's Planning, Design & Access Statement states that fencing has recently been erected under permitted development rights.

I request that WBC verifies that position, including the height, location and extent of the fencing and whether the relevant permitted development requirements are satisfied.

Irrespective of whether separate planning permission is required for the fencing itself, its presence is relevant to understanding the cumulative visual transformation of the site.

The Council should therefore consider the combined effect of the fencing, vegetation removal, enlarged access, hardstanding/parking and proposed building upon the previously more open rural appearance of the land.

8. Previous concerns about hardstanding, drainage and rural

character remain relevant
Application 182433 is also relevant for another reason.

During consideration of that application, concerns were raised regarding increased hardstanding, drainage and the effect upon the open rural character of the site.

The 2018 permission subsequently included detailed drainage requirements.

Those issues have not disappeared. They arguably require closer consideration now because the current application includes a significantly altered access and apparently considerably more formalised parking/hardstanding.

WBC should establish the total existing and proposed impermeable/hardstanding area and ensure that an adequate surface-water drainage solution is demonstrated.

9. Planning history should be considered accurately
I do not dispute that 182433 is a material part of the site's planning history. However, it should be given appropriate weight for what was actually approved.

The 2018 scheme retained the existing stable, added a separate approximately 55m stable building and expressly relied upon the existing access and hardstanding.

The current application proposes a different physical arrangement incorporating an approximately 89m replacement building, significantly widened access and apparently much greater parking/hardstanding.

It is therefore not appropriate to describe 182433 as establishing a precedent for all elements of the present application.

The current development must be assessed on its own merits against the current Development Plan, current NPPF, Wokingham landscape policies and the adopted Hurst Village Design Statement.

10. A proportionate alternative is available
I am not seeking to prevent the reasonable improvement of the existing equestrian facilities.

A replacement stable of a similar scale and footprint to the existing building, retaining a proportionate rural access and limiting additional hardstanding, would substantially reduce my concerns.

What requires justification is why replacement of the existing stable necessitates an approximately 78% increase in floor area together with six indicated parking spaces, substantial hardstanding and an approximately 9.3m-wide access.

Conclusion

I respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council refuses

application 262011 in its current form, having regard to the cumulative scale of the development and its impact upon the rural character of this part of Hurst.

In particular, before determining the application I ask WBC to:

1. assess whether the approximately 78% larger replacement building is proportionate in this countryside location;
2. require justification for the approximately 9.3m access and establish precisely what retrospective works have already occurred;
3. resolve the discrepancy between the application information referring to 2 car parking spaces and the proposed plan showing 6 parking spaces, including one disabled space;
4. establish the full extent of existing and proposed hardstanding and its drainage implications;
5. investigate the extent and timing of vegetation/tree/bush removal associated with the works including work already carried out;
6. verify the planning status of the recently erected approximately 6ft perimeter fencing;
7. assess the cumulative landscape impact of the building, access, parking, hardstanding, fencing and vegetation loss;
8. assess the proposal against the Hurst Village Design Statement and relevant Wokingham countryside and landscape policies; and
9. consider permission 182433 accurately as planning history, rather than as a precedent for development materially different from that actually approved.

The principal issue is not the continuation of equestrian use. It is whether the scale and cumulative physical transformation now proposed is appropriate for this rural site.

In my view, the current proposal goes materially beyond a modest replacement of the existing stable and should either be refused or substantially reduced so that the building, access and associated works remain proportionate to their countryside setting.