

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(2)	25/01915/FULMAJ Aldermaston	18 th December 2025 ¹	Part retrospective: Retention of storage shed, entrance gates, hard surfacing and boundary treatments (including gabion walls, security railings, and mesh fencing), as well as the marginal extension of boundary treatments and additional hard surfacing. Change of Use to B8 storage and Distribution. Padworth Saw Mills Rag Hill Aldermaston Reading RG7 4NU Mr P Harrington
¹ Extension of time agreed with applicant until 4 th September 2026			

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:

[25/01915/FULMAJ | Part retrospective: Retention of storage shed, entrance gates, hard surfacing and boundary treatments \(including gabion walls, security railings, and mesh fencing\), as well as the marginal extension of boundary treatments and additional hard surfacing. Change of use to B8 Storage and distribution. | Padworth Saw Mills Rag Hill Aldermaston Reading RG7 4NU](#)

Recommendation Summary: To delegate to the Development Manager to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION

Ward Member(s): Councillor Dominic Boeck

Reason for Committee Determination: More than 10 objections

Committee Site Visit: 26th August 2026

Contact Officer Details

Name: Sian Cutts
Job Title: Interim Principal Planning Officer
Tel No: 01635 519111
Email: Sian.cutts@westberks.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider the proposed development against the policies of the development plan and the relevant material considerations, and to make a decision as to whether to approve or refuse the application.
- 1.2 This application seeks part retrospective planning permission for the retention of a storage shed, entrance gates, hard surfacing and boundary treatments (including gabion walls, security railings, and mesh fencing), as well as the marginal extension of boundary treatments and additional hard surfacing. Change of use to B8 Storage and Distribution at Padworth Saw Mills, Rag Hill, Aldermaston.
- 1.3 The application site covers 4.35 hectares, and utilises the site of the Padworth Saw Mills. The site is accessed from Rag Hill, Aldermaston. There is a complex planning history on this site, as set out below, with a history of authorised uses relating to the sawmill business on the site, and areas of B8 and B2 usage granted through certificates of lawfulness.
- 1.4 The application is seeking a change of uses of the site to B8 Storage and Distribution together with the retention of the gabion walls and fencing which have been erected along the site boundary, the retention of an area of hard surfacing, and additional hard surfacing across a larger part of the site, and the retention of a storage shed. The application also identifies areas of the site that will be allocated as open air storage. The application also includes an area of proposed soft landscaping along a section of the northern boundary of the site along Rag Hill. New gates and fencing and alterations to the entrance are also included within the application. The description of the development has been amended during the course of the application to include the change of use of the site to B8 use.

2. Planning History

- 2.1 The table below outlines the relevant planning history of the application site.

Application	Proposal	Decision / Date
78/08840/ADD	Erection of building to store fencing stakes	Refused 26/07/1978
78/09580/CERTE	Established use of land for buying of timber for debarking machining treating and selling as fencing stakes	Approved 06/04/1979
79/10565/ADD	Erection of building for debarking treating & storage of fencing stakes	Approved 30/05/1979
80/12315/ADD	New building for messroom/kitchen/toilets for workers	Approved 03/04/1980
82/18298/ADD	New building for storage of timber for fencing stakes/post & rails	Approved 05/01/1983

85/24661/ADD	Extension to existing use	Refused 09/10/1985 Appeal Allowed 11/09/1986
85/25290/ADD	Extension to existing use	Refused 02/01/1986
86/25673/ADD	Tipping of Soil	Approved 28/08/1986
91/039059/ADD	Demolition of dilapidated unit and erection of new unit for storage of fencing stakes and timber on same site	Approved 29/05/1991
93/43963/ADD	Industrial building for manufacture of fence posts	Approved 15/02/1994
01/01432/CERT	Workshop and garage commercial use	Approved 08/07/2002
10/02834/CERTE	B8 Storage and distribution business from area and buildings.	Approved 24/01/2012

3. Legal and Procedural Matters

- 3.1 **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):** Given the nature, scale and location of this development, it is not considered to fall within the description of any development listed in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. As such, EIA screening is not required.
- 3.2 **Publicity:** Publicity has been undertaken in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. A site notice was displayed on 26th September at the site entrance, with a deadline for representations of 17th October 2025. A public notice was displayed in the Newbury Weekly News on 25th September 2025; with a deadline for representations of 9th October 2025. Notification letters were sent to 4 neighbouring properties.
- 3.3 When the description of the development was changed, and additional supporting information was submitted, a new site notice was displayed on 5th June 2026, with a deadline for representations of 26th June 2026. The four neighbouring properties, and anybody who had made representations on the application were notified of the amendments on 3rd June 2026.
- 3.4 **Local Financial Considerations:** Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that a local planning authority must have regard to a local finance consideration as far as it is material. Whether or not a 'local finance

consideration' is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision based on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority or other government body. The table below identified the relevant local financial considerations for this proposal.

Consideration	Applicable to proposal	Material to decision	Refer to paragraph(s)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	No		
New Homes Bonus	No		
Affordable Housing	No		
Public Open Space or Play Areas	No		
Developer Contributions (S106)	No		
Job Creation	No	Yes	6.13

3.5 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development within an authority area. The money is used to pay for new infrastructure, supporting the development of an area by funding the provision, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. CIL will be used to fund roads and other transport facilities, schools and other educational facilities, flood defences, medical facilities, open spaces, and sports and recreational areas. Subject to the application of any applicable exemptions, CIL will be charged on residential (Use Classes C3 and C4) and retail (former Use Classes A1 – A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of gross internal area (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres). CIL liability, and the application of any exemptions, will be formally confirmed by the CIL Charging Authority under separate cover following any grant of planning permission. More information is available at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/community-infrastructure-levy>

3.6 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Council must have due regard to the need to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3.7 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 3.8 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage, the duty is to have regard to and remove or minimise disadvantage. In considering the merits of this planning application, due regard has been given to these objectives.
- 3.9 There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.
- 3.10 **Human Rights Act:** The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, including Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of property), Article 6 (Right to a fair trial) and Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life and home) of the Act itself. The consideration of the application in accordance with the Council procedures will ensure that views of all those interested are taken into account. All comments from interested parties have been considered and reported in summary in this report, with full text available via the Council's website.
- 3.11 It is acknowledged that there are certain properties where they may be some impact (this can be mitigated by conditions – if relevant) However, any interference with the right to a private and family life and home arising from the scheme as a result of impact on residential amenity is considered necessary in a democratic society in the interests of the economic well-being of the district and wider area and is proportionate given the overall benefits of the scheme in terms of provision of employment land.
- 3.12 Any interference with property rights is in the public interest and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 regime for controlling the development of land. This recommendation is based on the consideration of the proposal against adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.
- 3.13 **Listed building setting:** Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 16(2) has the same requirement for proposals for listed building consent. Upper Church Farm Aldermaston is a grade II listed building situated 120 metres to the south-west of the site. Due to the intervening buildings the proposal does not affect the setting of this listed building.
- 3.14 **Conservation areas:** Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. There are no Conservation Areas in close proximity to the site.

4. Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

- 4.1 The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report.

Aldermaston Parish Council:	1st response: Welcome the application to regularise the development that has taken place, but raise concerns that there are other additional works that need to be addressed, and object to the application • Importation of material and engineering works to raise ground levels, and the LPA should consider whether these are lawful and how to mitigate damage • Buildings of varying nature on the plans, some are new and may need consent along with the storage shed • Impact of run-off from area so asphalt and concrete • The application assumes the whole site has B8 use, there is a history of planning application of the parts of the site near the entrance, there are sporadic unauthorised uses since 2014 that do not benefit from planning permission, and aerial photos show parts of the site being used to dump waste, the site requires site restoration, remediation, and a planning application for a material change of use • Intensification of the use of the site has not been addressed, increased productivity will lead to material change of use and exacerbate problems with poor access, and may have safety implications associated with AWE Aldermaston. • Access to the site via Rag Hill is unsuitable for HGV traffic, there are limited passing places and HGVs and other commercial vehicles frequently need to reverse over ¼ of a mile before a passing place is found. • Exacerbate a dangerous situation for residents and cyclists using Rag Hill, as it is part of a WBC designated cycle route, and connects two footpaths, and a Bridleway • Photographs of the site at different times have also been included with the representation • Detrimental impact on visual amenity of the security fencing and gabion walls, erection a fence inside the landscaping would have been more appropriate, and replacement landscaping is required. Requests conditions to control hours of operations; a lighting plan; restrictions on the access route, a screening plan should be agreed to reduce visual intrusion and limit noise disturbance; the
------------------------------------	---

	applicant should be responsible for monitoring and managing water drainage to third party land; an engineer should assess the robustness if the construction of the land levels; measures to ensure vulnerable users of the highway are not affected or put at risk when HGVs reverse 2nd Response: A statement which sets out the opinion of the Parish Council that the site should not be considered as an unfettered B8 use across the whole site. It sets out why it considers that the previously published report was erroneous in its description of the lawful use of the site. It requests that a new report is produced in the light of the information provided in the legal opinion prepared on behalf of the Parish. Appended to the statement is a Site Assessment, Official planning history, aerial imagery, highway impact assessment and planning policy assessment. In addition, the following annexes were provided setting out correspondence with the Environment Agency in 2008, Public Protection Partnership 2020, Environment Agency 2018, WBC Enforcement Team 2019, regarding GPL 2017, Paices Hill Appeal decision, The Officer's report March 2026, correspondence between the case officer and the chair of the Parish Council February 2026. These are available to view in full within the background papers. Legal Opinion: The Parish Council instructed Keystone Law to provide a legal opinion on why the application should be refused. The opinion is that the site does not benefit from a B8 use across the whole site contrary to the conclusions in the previous report. The site cannot be considered as previously developed land as the development has not occurred lawfully, there are uses on the site which are unlawful and not immune from enforcement action, There is no analysis of how the site came to be in B8 use. There is no primary use on the site, and different lawful uses. The areas of unlawful use should return to agricultural use. The previous report is fundamentally flawed, and so the interpretation of policies is incorrect. The full legal opinion is available to within the background papers. 3rd Response: Object, the whole site is not previously developed land, past changes of use are not lawful and cannot be made acceptable by changing the description. A more zonal approach should be taken to the history. Points to highlight • Only 6% of the site has an unfettered B8 use. Certificates of lawfulness do not apply to the whole site • The whole site is not previously developed land so SP17 not met. Dispute the claim in the amended Design & Access Statement that the lawful uses on the site were B2 & B8, much of the site was not lawful when the applicant acquired the site in 2022. • Existing use of the site prior to 2022 was not lawful meaning DM35 not met
--	--

	• Unauthorised uses across the site are not immune from enforcement action • Planning permission should be required for any development that is not agriculture • The change of use assumes a change from B2 to B8 which is erroneous, given the fragmented mixed use of the site. Addendum does not relate to whether previous uses were lawful • Investigation should be made into the import of waste into the site raising ground levels by 5-10 metres. The site is on the Environment Agency's National Watchlist of High priority waste sites in England May 2026 • Traffic addendum does not acknowledge traffic restrictions which results in no legal access route for HGVs to the site • No changes to the access are claimed but new gates and fences have been erected and HGVs have been observed making multiple manoeuvres to access the site. Swept path analysis is required • Reliance on B2 uses across the site and the TRICS data to show a reduction in traffic, the site has never been used in an intensive, organised way as now proposed. Actual historic traffic data should be used. • The traffic addendum conclusion is flawed • Inadequate assessment by the Highway officer • Single carriageway road is a planning constraint, future occupiers will access the site with HGVs, and previous planning history should be a planning constraint • Gabion walls are jarring, and replacement landscaping is inadequate • Close proximity to public footpaths • Analysis of the planning history is vague & fails to take into account that past consents covered small areas of the site, • Unauthorised ground works and levelling have taken place since 2022, including levelling of bunds, and further groundworks have taken place resulting in poorly engineered escarpments which are an eyesore and negative visual impact • Quote the highways authority comments about unsuitability of the roads for lorries in an appeal statement in 1986. The appeal was allowed, as there would not be an increase in vehicles accessing the site
--	---

	• There will be an intensification of the use of the site, leading to increased noise, hours of operation, deliveries and employment levels • There is no fallback position of an unfettered B2 or B8 use • Previous conditions were not complied with • Request conditions as previously requested including use restrictions, and screening
Highways:	1st Response: No highway objections 2nd Response: Further clarification is required on what the existing permitted use is at this site and the scale, with guidance on how the existing and proposed uses need to be considered, in order that the Highway Authority can adequately assess the impact that this proposal will have. 3rd Response: Generally, B2 use generates a greater level of vehicle trips than B8. This is supported by the TRICS data provided within the Highways Technical Note Addendum. As part of the site was previously B2 use it is considered reasonable that the site could potentially result in a level of traffic generation that it not greater than the previous permitted use.
Environmental Health:	1st Response: No objection 2nd Response: Continue to have no objection
LLFA:	No Objection subject to conditions
Trees:	Object: The removal of 100-120 m of boundary trees along Rag Hill has taken place and replaced in part by gabion crates and metal fencing, previously it was tree lines. There has been a loss of a significant number of trees to the detriment of the character of the area, the mitigation proposed will be set back from the public realm and not soften the visual impact from the road or public footpath.
Active Travel England:	No comment
Waste Management:	No comment
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	No duty on the Fire Service to comment on the application and highlight requirements of S32 of the Berkshire Act 1986.
Nature Space:	No objection, and provide informatives about the reducing the potential impact on Greater Crested Newts
Archaeologist:	There are no archaeological implications to this proposal, but most of the boundaries could be of later 19 th century date or older and might have ecological as well as historic interest.

Ecology:	1 st Response: Need to review the BNG Calculator which was not submitted with the application 2 nd Response: Sufficient information provided and recommend conditions
Thames Water:	No response received
Environment Agency:	No comments to make
Emergency Planning:	No adverse comments to make on the basis that the site is outside the DEPZ for AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield. The site is within the Outline Planning Zone and will be accounted for in the AWE off-site Emergency Plan
Access Officer:	No response received
Thames Valley Police:	No response received
SPOKES:	No response received
Economic Development:	No response received
Transport Policy:	No response received
Environment Delivery Team:	No response received
Integrated Care Board:	No response received

Public representations

- 4.2 Representations have been received from 22 contributors, 0 of which support, and 22 of which object to the proposal.
- 4.3 The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report. In summary, the following issues/points have been raised:
- Insufficient passing places on the single track road for lorries and trucks which is dangerous
 - Road has a 7.5 tonne limit apart from access, and access direction has a width restriction
 - Traffic calming or reduction in the speed limit should be considered
 - The lane is frequently used by local residents, walkers, horse riders, fitness groups,
 - Problems experienced with lorry driver behaviours, and damage to verges
 - Impact on the rural character of the area, removal of the trees, and replacement with the gabions and fencing, this should be behind the screening

- Increase in noise, traffic and potential pollution will disturb habitats and threaten species that rely on hedgerows, fields and woodland
- The site has grown from a small shed building company 8 years ago to a heavy goods logistics hub down a residential country road which is unsuitable
- Many near-miss incidents
- Noise pollution for residents
- Flood risk from the site as there is an ongoing problem with water running down Rag Hill
- Rag Hill not designed for the size and volume of traffic
- Insufficient access for expansion of the site
- Accept that there has been some commercial use established historically. The majority of the site does not have planning permission and no continuous use has existed, which has allowed the change of use through the passage of time, the area of Harris' Copse should be returned to agricultural land, not incorporating it into the site and doubling it.
- Land levels have been increased and some of this has been by the previous owner who was prosecuted, and waste should have been removed but this did not occur, and more has been added, and inert material continues to be delivered to site
- Due to changes in land level the remaining screening does not adequately screen the site
- Light pollution from lights left on overnight
- Reliant on adjoining landowners to provide screening
- Noise impact for neighbours
- Negative impact on adjacent land due to groundwater leaching out of the banks the soakaways are not deep enough
- The Technical Note identifies that lorries will use the north exit from the site, but this has a width restriction in place, and the southern route has been identified as unsuitable
- Incorrect site boundary
- The mature tree and hedges historically provided natural protection which significantly lessened the impact of frost and ice
- Inadequate site screening
- There are other buildings on the site which should be considered as part of the application
- No more HGVs should be allowed to go through Aldermaston village
- Aldermaston village is not suitable for HGV traffic, damage to boundary walls from HGVs
- HGV traffic vibrations harm historic buildings
- Aldermaston village is a conservation area, and want support to conserve it.
- Exit through the village are not suitable
- Incursion to adjoining land, metal fencing has replaced wood fencing
- Potential leaching from the site.
- Para 116 of the NPPF refers to the cumulative impacts on the highway, and the size of the lorries is an unacceptable impact
- Concerns about the descriptions of the uses in the previous committee report, and lack of objection from the Highways Authority
- Plans and extracts with comments relating to the planning history of the site
- Noise pollution and air quality issues for schools and nurseries in Aldermaston.
- Traffic will be untenable for residents in Aldermaston
- The enlargement of this site is unnecessary
- Will increase traffic along Church Road which may also exceed the 7.5 tonne weight limit, and increase the accident risk
- The site has expanded from a sawmill and wood yard to a full scale commercial industrial unit, with impacts on traffic noise, ecology and the rural setting

- Issues with HGVs meeting each other and unable to pass along Raghill
- No lawful or suitable access to Padworth sawmills that avoids the 7.5 tonne restriction or 6 foot 6 inch width restriction

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

Development Plan Document	Relevant Policies
<u>West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041</u>	Strategic Policies • Policy SP1 The Spatial Strategy • Policy SP2 North Wessex Downs AONB • Policy SP3 Settlement Hierarchy • Policy SP4 AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield • Policy SP5 Responding to Climate Change • Policy SP6 Flood Risk • Policy SP7 Design Quality • Policy SP8 Landscape Character • Policy SP9 Historic Environment • Policy SP10 Green Infrastructure • Policy SP11 Biodiversity & Geodiversity • Policy SP12 Approach to Housing Delivery • Policy SP17 Strategic Approach to Employment Land • Policy SP18 Town & District Centres • Policy SP19 Transport • Policy SP20 Infrastructure Requirements & Delivery Development Management Policies • Policy DM3 Health & Wellbeing • Policy DM4 Building Sustainable Homes & Businesses • Policy DM5 Environmental Nuisance & Pollution Control • Policy DM6 Water Quality • Policy DM7 Water Resources & Waste Water • Policy DM8 Air Quality • Policy DM15 Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows • Policy DM30 Residential Amenity • Policy DM35 Sustaining a Prosperous Rural Economy • Policy DM41 Digital Infrastructure • Policy DM42 Transport Infrastructure • Policy DM44 Parking • Policy DM45 Travel Planning

5.2 The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide
- Quality Design SPD (2006)
- Planning Obligations SPD (2014)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD (2018)

6. Appraisal

Principle of development

6.1 The most important policies for assessing the principle of development are Policies SP1, SP3, SP17, and DM35 of the Local Plan Review. These are assessed below.

6.2 **Policy SP1** sets the overarching spatial strategy for West Berkshire, which directs development to areas of lower environmental value, optimises use of previously developed land, and optimises the density of development to make the best use of land whilst conserving and enhancing the distinctive character and identity of the built, historic and natural environment.

6.3 The application site is located within the spatial area known as the Eastern Area. The policy states that the area will continue to be important for business development with the retention of designated employment areas. Outside of settlement boundaries, land will be treated as open countryside where development will be more restricted, as set out in policy DM35 for economic development.

6.4 **Policy SP3** provides a settlement hierarchy to focus development based on the function and sustainability of settlement across the District and promote sustainable communities. Development outside of these settlements, in other rural hamlets and in isolated groups of development will be restricted to that which is appropriate in a rural area.

6.5 The application site is located outside of any settlement boundary, and is therefore treated as open countryside where development is more restricted, and policy DM35 applies. A detailed assessment against Policy DM35 follows.

6.6 **Policy SP17** sets the strategic approach to employment land. It states that through the LPR the Council will seek to facilitate the growth and forecasted change of business development over the plan period through site allocations and by promoting the supply of B8 storage space in the District.

6.7 According to Policy SP17, appropriate proposals for business development (offices, industrial, and storage and distribution) will be supported where they are located:

- a. On sites allocated for business development in accordance with the individual site specific policy (ESA1 -ESA6) in this Plan or any subsequent neighbourhood plans; or
- b. On a suitable site within a settlement boundary; or
- c. Within a Designated Employment Area (DEA) in accordance with policy DM31, and as listed in Appendix 4 and as defined on the Policies Map; or

- d. On previously developed land within existing suitably located employment sites; or
 - e. Within the countryside provided the proposal is in accordance with other relevant policies within the Plan, in particular policy DM35.
- 6.8 The policy goes on to say that the redevelopment and regeneration of existing employment sites for business use will be supported.
- 6.9 The application site is an existing employment site, where Policy SP17 supports the redevelopment and regeneration of existing business sites. The planning history of this site has been examined in detail, and reconsidered since the previous report for consideration on this application was published, although consideration of the application by the Eastern Area Planning Committee was deferred prior to the meeting. The planning history of the site indicates that in 1979 an Established Use Certificate (78/09580/CERTE) was granted “for buying of timber for debarking machining treating and selling as fencing stakes.” A subsequent planning application (79/10565/ADD) for a building for debarking machining treating and selling was approved in May 1979. The subsequent planning applications have demonstrated that the site was being used to make timber fence stakes through bringing fresh timber to the site, treating it, and making timber stakes which were then delivered off-site. This timber was collected from other sites, and so it was a manufacturing process only on the site, which is a B2 use, rather than a sawmill ancillary to any forestry use taking place on the site. A planning application submitted in 1993 (93/43963/ADD) for an industrial building for manufacture of fence posts, was submitted with a plan showing extensive use of the site for ancillary storage purposes, i.e. ancillary B2 use. This plan is attached as an appendix. This demonstrates that an extensive part of the site has planning permission for storage purposes ancillary to the primary B2 use of the site. There has also been a period of unregulated uses on the site. In 2010 a certificate of lawfulness for the buildings and land in the south-east corner of the site was granted for B8 storage use, and a certificate was also granted for a vehicle repair business within the site in 2002. During this period there were other uses on the site, which also included some timber processing, as demonstrated by aerial photographs of the site. These uses introduced new planning units onto the site, some of which were never regularised – i.e. were unauthorised. It is understood that when the site was bought by the applicant those uses ceased on the site, and so a new planning chapter is being commenced with this application which is seeking a B8 use across the whole site. However, given the wood processing activities and ancillary storage activities that have taken place across the whole site in accordance with the 1993 planning permission, it is considered that site constitutes previously developed land, as defined by the NPPF. It is acknowledged that there is some ambiguity in the planning history about the extent of the land coverage. However, without any evidence to contradict the sawmill use having been established and remaining established as the lawful use of the site (excluding those parcels subject of their own Lawful Development Certificates), it is considered to have remained previously developed land. As any other uses not subject of grant of a Lawful Development Certificate have ceased, were unauthorised and have not been demonstrated to have been lawful, your officers’ view is that these did not change the use of the land away from its established lawful use for Class B2 purposes as a sawmill and ancillary storage land as approved in 1993. The redevelopment of the site as an existing employment site is supported by Policy SP17 and the advice contained within E4 of the NPPF which supports development proposals in rural areas which are not well served by public transport to use previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing development, which includes the area of the land within the application site that has been disputed by the Parish Council as previously developed land, and is within the curtilage of the sawmill site.
- 6.10 **Policy DM35** (sustaining a prosperous rural economy) states that development proposals that contribute to sustaining a prosperous rural economy will be encouraged.

To support the rural economy, proposals for economic development in the countryside will only be permitted where they satisfy the given criteria.

- 6.11 It should be noted that Policy DM35 applies to all forms of economic development in the countryside. This is consistent with E4 of the NPPF which says that in meeting the need for business land and development the sustainable growth of business in rural areas should be supported. E4 2 of the NPPF as referred to above highlights the opportunities for development proposals to use previously developed land.
- 6.12 The criteria of policy DM35 are set out below, with an appraisal of the proposed development.
- a) The proposals demonstrate that the business can make a positive contribution to the rural economy.
- 6.13 The Planning Inspector's Paragraph 24 of the Hoad Way Theale appeal decision (APP/W0340/W/25/3360702) reinforces that "the [current Local Plan Review] policies are not worded to specify or limit the particular nature of the proposed development to rural enterprises, rather look to a generalised benefit of the rural economy." The proposed uses do not have an intrinsic connection to a rural area. However, given their location in the countryside of the Eastern Area, it is reasonable to conclude that a number of future employees may live in the local area which is predominantly rural, and to this extent will contribute positively to the generalised benefit of the rural economy.
- b) The use/development is suitable for a rural location.
- 6.14 This is assessed on an individual basis within the context of each application site. In this instance the application site is an existing business as set out in the assessment of Policy SP17 above. The application is proposing the retention of development including the siting of a storage building, within the existing site, as well as hard surfacing and the alterations to the boundaries. In principle, given the employment use of the site, the development is proposed in a suitable location, subject to the consideration of the other criteria within Policy DM35
- c) The proposals are compatible with uses in the surrounding area.
- 6.15 The application is proposing additional works and building within the existing site. As this is an existing use the proposal is considered to be compatible with the uses in the surrounding area. There will be an assessment of how the development as proposed will impact the residential amenity of the nearby residential dwellings under a separate heading.
- d) Where new buildings are proposed the landowner has not disposed of, or converted, any buildings to a residential use in the previous 3 years which could have met the needs of the development proposed.
- 6.16 No buildings on the site have been disposed of or converted which could have been used for the proposed development.
- 6.17 Criteria e, f, and g will be considered in more detail, as these relate to the design and siting of development and the highway impacts, and so as they do not relate to the principle of the development are also considered under the individual headings. Albeit that the Highways Officer has not raised any objections to the proposals.
- h) It would not have a detrimental effect on the fabric, character and setting of historic buildings or other heritage assets.

6.18 Upper Church Farm Aldermaston, is a grade II listed building situated 120 metres to the south-west of the site. Due to the intervening buildings the proposal does not affect the setting of this listed building.

i) Appropriate proposals which make more efficient use of previously developed land will be encouraged. The site constitutes previously developed land.

6.19 The application site constitutes previously developed land, as discussed above. The development proposed, and the works which have been carried out are intended to support the business development on the site, and so is considered to make efficient use of this previously developed site.

6.20 The application site is not allocated for development, within a settlement boundary, or within a DEA. However, taking the above policies together, it is considered to be previously developed land, and an existing employment site in the countryside and accordingly it is considered that the principle of development is in accordance with the current Local Plan policies SP17 and DM35.

Character and appearance

6.21 Policy SP7 requires that new development will strengthen a sense of place through high quality locally distinctive design and place shaping, and that development should take opportunities for conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and quality of an area and the way it functions. The policy goes on to say that development proposals will be expected to show how they have responded positively to national and local design guidance.

6.22 Policy DM35 criterion e requires:

Any proposals are of a high quality design, are appropriate in terms of siting, scale, form, massing, character and appearance having regard to the surrounding rural area and its setting in the wider rural landscape.

6.23 Criterion g of Policy DM35 requires:

New or replacement buildings are located within or adjoining an existing group of buildings and further expansion into the open countryside is avoided;

6.24 The proposal includes the retention of a building to the south of the site. The building is constructed of metal sheeting coloured blue, which is 7.8 metres to ridge height, and 5.8 metres to eaves height. The design and appearance of the building is industrial and utilitarian, and appropriate. It is of a size and scale which relates to the rest of the built form within the site and to the overall appearance of the site, with a commercial use. It is sited adjacent to existing buildings, and does not extend the development into the open countryside. The application is proposing open storage within the site, and so a condition is proposed to restrict the height of open storage to 6 metres in height within the site, to minimise the visual impact of the development. A condition is also proposed requiring the removal of a redundant portacabin office building on the site.

6.25 The application is also proposing the retention of gabion walls and fencing, as well the widening of the entrance to the site from Rag Hill. The creation of the new fencing and gabion walls has resulted in the loss of trees along the boundary with the highway. This has opened up the site to more views from the public highway, and has also eroded the rural appearance of the lane, and making the commercial appearance of the site more evident within the rural environment. The Tree Officer has raised an objection due to the loss of trees, and impact on the landscape setting, and this is discussed in more detail below. The loss of trees and hedge is regrettable as a screen to the site, as the public

views of the site have been opened up, and there is harm to the rural character of this part of Rag Hill. However, the mix of fencing and gabion walls along the boundary which have been erected is not as stark as some industrial fencing can be. The mixture of materials which have been used, particularly the use of the stone gabion baskets assists in the boundary relating appropriately to the rural setting of the site. In addition, an area of landscaping is proposed in the north-east corner of the site, which will assist in providing additional screening to that corner of the site and this can be secured through conditions. The site is proposed to be continued to be used for B8 storage purposes. The application proposes the retention of hard surfacing which has been laid on the site, and the laying of further hardstanding across the site. Whilst this will have some visual impact, overall, this will be within the context of the wider storage use within the site. The site history and aerial photography indicate that the areas where it is proposed to extend the hardstanding have been used as areas of storage, and so the extension of the hardstanding will not increase the storage area within the site, but will contribute towards it functioning better, with an improved surface for the storage areas. There have been concerns raised about light pollution, and whilst the existing hardstanding areas of the site are not included within the application, it is possible to impose a condition to restrict lighting within the areas proposed to be hard surfaced, to minimise light pollution within the rural environment.

- 6.26 Whilst the site has been opened up in views from the public domain, overall the new boundary treatments are considered to be appropriate to a commercial site within the rural setting, and with the addition of landscaping, there will be some mitigation. The building which has been constructed is appropriate within the overall setting of the site, and the hard surfacing will enable a more appropriate surfacing of areas of the site which have been developed and used historically for storage purposes.

Residential Amenity

- 6.27 Policy DM35 as previously discussed required the proposed use to be compatible with surrounding land uses. Policy DM5 says development proposal will be supported where amongst other criteria there would be harm to the amenity of occupants of neighbouring land and buildings though an unacceptable increase in pollution, including from light, noise, vibration and/or odour. Policy DM30 also sets out criteria for assessing the harm on living conditions of existing residential dwellings, which includes no harm due to noise, dust, fumes and odours
- 6.28 The application site is to the north of a group of dwellings on Rag Hill. The areas of development proposed within this application are situated to the northern and eastern end of the site. The storage building which is proposed to be retained, is approximately 120m away from the boundary of the site with the nearest dwelling (Hillview), and there is an intervening building between the boundary and the storage building. The area proposed for additional hard surfacing is further to the north and east of the site. The new boundary treatments are along the boundary with Rag Hill, rather than any adjoining residential properties. The physical developments on the site will not result in additional harm to the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties. The site is an existing commercial site, and so the proposal is not considered to result in additional harm from an increase in pollution for light, noise, vibration and/or odour. The Environmental Health Officers have assessed the proposals, and do not raise any objections to the application, which is not considered to result in significant harm to the residential amenity of nearby residential dwellings, given the authorised uses on the site.

Highways

- 6.29 Policy SP19 sets out the policies which relate to development that generates a transport impact, and seeks to minimise all forms of travel on the environment, to mitigate any adverse impacts on local transport networks and the strategic road network. Policy

DM44 sets out the parking requirements for new development. Policy DM35 requires that development does not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the rural roads, byways or restricted byways affected by the proposal or require improvements to these roads, byways, or restricted byways which could be detrimental to their character and use by motorised and non-motorised traffic;

- 6.30 There have been a number of objections raised from members of the public and the Parish Council about the use of the road leading to the site, and the type of vehicles using it, and their potential impact on highway safety. The proposal is for an alteration to the existing access to the site, and for additional hard surfacing within the site, as well as a change of use of the site to B8 use. The Highways Officer has noted that the Highways Technical Note Addendum has provided details of likely traffic movements from the previous B2/B8 use on the site, and the likely reduction in vehicle movements as a B8 use across the site. The Highways Addendum has referred to both the authorised uses and the unauthorised activities that were taking place prior to the change in ownership of the site. The Highways Officer also requested further clarity about the authorised uses on the site to ensure the assessment was based on the correct land uses. This was provided via email, and concluded that the authorised activities on the site included a B2 sawmill with associated storage and areas of B8 storage and distribution for which a Certificate of Lawfulness applies. In the light of the additional information provided about the previous uses on the site, the Highways Officer has concluded that using the TRICS data provided within the Highways Technical Note Addendum that as part of the site was previously in B2 use it is considered reasonable that the site could potentially result in a level of traffic generation that is not greater than the previous permitted use on the site, and so do not raise any objections to the proposal on highway safety grounds.
- 6.31 There are no objections raised by the Highways Officer, and whilst there are objections for the local community due to the level and type of traffic, given the authorised uses on the site, the proposed development is considered to generate a level of traffic which will not result in additional harm to highway safety and accords with the highway requirements of Policies SP19, SP17, and DM35 and the parking requirements of Policy DM44.

Drainage

- 6.32 Policy SP6 requires that on all development sites surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the use of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS). It also requires that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is submitted where a development is in an area of flood risk from any source of flooding, or on a site of more than 1 hectare. The policy says that development will only be supported if it is demonstrated that it is located and designed to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is acceptable in planning terms, and there are no suitable and available sites at a lower flood risk. The policy sets out the criteria for development within areas at risk of flooding to meet, and requires that on all development sites surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implantation of SuDS, and setting out run-off rates for development to meet.
- 6.33 The application has been submitted with a Sustainable Drainage Assessment, and a Flood Risk Assessment. This sets out how the drainage will be managed in a sustainable manner to soakaways within the site. The Council's drainage team have reviewed the details which have been submitted with the application, and they are satisfied with the level of information provided, and the conclusions of the Assessment. No objections have been raised, and the details are considered to be satisfactory, and in accordance with Policy SP6.

Trees & Hedgerows

- 6.34 Policy DM15 says that development which conserves and enhances trees, woodland and hedgerows will be supported. It goes on to say that where appropriate opportunities should be identified for the restoration and planting of new trees, woodland and hedgerows. This application is seeking retrospective permission for new boundary treatment along Rag Hill, for the wall and fencing which replaced trees along that boundary, over a distance of 100-120 metres. The trees which have been removed were not subject to a Tree Preservation Order. However, they did contribute towards the rural character of Rag Hill, and the Public Right of Way ALDE/12/2 passes through the Aqua Vitae Copse and the Ancient Woodland of Great Fishers Copse to the north of the site from Rag Hill. The removal of the trees has also reduced the level of amenity experienced by users of that path. The Tree Officer has raised concern that there is insufficient justification for the removal of the trees, other than security for the site, which could have been achieved without removing the trees. There is mitigation planting proposed, and this can be secured by condition, but it is considered by the Tree Officer that this is not sufficient to overcome the harm to the character of the area. This has been attributed some negative weight in the planning balance, as addressed at section 7.1 below.

Ecology

- 6.35 Policy SP11 requires new development to demonstrate how they conserve and enhance biodiversity including their long-term management and where required to deliver Biodiversity Net Gains. The policy sets out criteria for protecting and enhancing biodiversity and protecting nationally and internationally designated sites, as well as irreplaceable habitats.
- 6.36 The application has been submitted with a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Metric. The Council's Ecologist and the Newt Officer have not raised any objections to the proposal, as they are satisfied with the level of information which has been provided. The Council's Ecologist has requested a number of conditions, this includes that the lighting is controlled in the interests of protecting bats within the area. This has also been recommended to minimise the impact of the rural skies, and is considered to be appropriate. There are also conditions required with regards to the construction phase of the development, and to control invasive non-native species within the site. The application also makes provision to provide Biodiversity New Gain, and conditions are required to secure this provision.
- 6.37 The Newt Officer as also made recommendations with regards to the potential for protecting habitats for newts within the site. These can be added as informative notes on the decision notice.
- 6.38 There have been objections raised about how the application will affect wildlife within and around the site. The details that have been submitted are considered to be satisfactory and the proposed development, and retention of existing works within the site is not considered to be harmful to the protected species and their habitats.

Climate Change

- 6.39 Policy SP5 requires the principles of climate change and adaptation to be included into new development, improving the resilience of land, buildings and existing and future communities to the opportunities and impacts arising from climate change. It goes on to say that development should contribute towards West Berkshire becoming, and staying carbon neutral, and sets out criteria for development to meet, depending upon the nature and scale of the proposals. The policy requires the submission of a Sustainability Statement, which demonstrates how the principles of Policy SP5 have been embedded into the development. It says that the level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed. Policy

DM4 requires new development to demonstrate how the development will achieve net zero operational carbon emissions.

- 6.40 The application has been submitted with a Sustainability Statement to set out how the principles of sustainability have been incorporated into the development. An Energy Statement has also been produced to refer to the storage shed building to be retained on the site. However, it is important to note that this building is for storage purposes only, and given the nature of the building for storage purposes only, and not as workspace, it only has very limited energy requirements, and so there is not a BREEAM standard which is applicable to this the building, or a need to reduce the carbon emissions.

Parish Council representations

- 6.41 The Parish Council have raised extensive objections to this application, and the matters of the principle of the development have been addressed. It is noted that the second representation received from the Parish Council with the legal opinion on the proposals was submitted before the description of the development was amended. The application now proposes the change of use of the application site to B8 use, and the assessment of the application has been made on this basis. Consequently, the assessment and this report have been fully revised to consider the change of use that is proposed within the current application.
- 6.42 The Parish Council objections have also referred to the waste deposition and moving of bunds on the site. It is not clear from the evidence presented when such works took place. The local authority has evidence that there was raising of the grounds in 2010 and so would now be immune from enforcement action. They have referred to the site being on the Environment Agency's Locations of High Priority Waste Sites in England. The list was initially published on 22nd May 2026 and updated on 10th July 2026 removed the site from the list. The Environment Agency were also consulted on the application, and they have not raised any objections to the application. There have been concerns raised about the stability of these areas of the site. The NPPF, P2 advises that sites should be suitable for their uses, taking into account land stability, and goes on to say that where a site is affected by land stability issues the responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner. Following this guidance, it is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure the stability of the site, and no land moving is required as part of this application.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 The application is proposing the retention of a storage shed, boundary treatment and security gate, the retention of some surfacing within the site, and the addition of further hard surfacing, and change of use of the site to B8 use. The works are generally considered to be of a benefit to the operation of the site, and the retention of business use of the site, and the ability to make effective use of the employment land, in accordance with Policies SP17 and DM35, and the NPPF (E2) says that substantial weight should be given to the economic benefits of proposal for commercial development which allows businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt. Therefore, substantial weight is given to the benefits of the continuing business use in the site, in a manner which regularises the activities and controls the proposed development. There are no objections from the Highways Officer or Environmental Health Officer, and the proposal is considered to have a neutral impact on the highway network, and the living conditions of nearby residents, given the authorised uses within the site. There has been harm identified due to the loss of trees along the boundary with Rag Hill, and this has opened up the site to public, and eroded the rural character of the lane. However, whilst there is some harm, and this given weight, this can be partially mitigated through

additional planting within the site, which lessens the weight of the harm afforded to the loss of rural character within Rag Hill. Nevertheless, this matter does attract moderate negative weight in the planning balance. There are also benefits of the development, through the works that have been carried out to overcome some previously identified harms within the site, and the introduction of a sustainable drainage system within the site to reduce the risk of flooding which are also given substantial weight. Therefore, addressing the planning balance overall, whilst there is identified harm in the form of harm to the character of the area and loss of trees, this is considered to be outweighed by the significant economic benefit of utilising an existing employment site within the District, consolidating the existing mixture of authorised B2 and B8 uses into a single authorised B8 use, the improvements to the appearance within the site, with the additional hardstanding make it more efficient to use, and the improvement to drainage arrangements and visibility at the access.

- 7.2 The proposal is considered to accord with the relevant development plan policies as a whole.

8. Full Recommendation

- 8.1 To delegate to the Development Manager to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the conditions listed below.

Conditions

1	Commencement of development The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2	Approved plans The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed below: Location Plan received 21st August 2025; Proposed Site Plan Drawing No PSM/PL/100 Rev A received 18th August 2025; Existing Fence Elevations Drawing No PSM/EX/300 received 21st August 2025; Proposed Elevation -Fence Drawing No PSM/PL/300 received 21st August 2025; Storage Shed – Existing Elevations Drawing No PSM/EX/203 received 21st August 2025; Existing Floor Plans – Storage Shed Drawing No PSM/EX/202 received 21st August 2025; Existing Floor Plan and Section Storage Shed Drawing No PSM/EX/202 Rev A received 18th August 2025; Tree Constraints Plan received 21st August 2025; Sustainability Statement dated September 2025 received 18th September 2025; Planning, Design and Access Statement dated Hune 2026 received 3rd June 2026 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by GS Ecology reference ECO3839 dated 4th August 2025 received 21st August 2025; Sustainable Drainage Assessment prepared by GeoSmart received 21st August 2025; Flood Risk Assessment prepared by GeoSmart received 21st August 2025;

	Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by GHA Trees dated 7th May 2025 received 21st August 2025; Highways Technical Note prepared by Paul Basham Associates received 21st August 2025; Highways Technical Note Addendum prepared by Paul Basham Associates reference 502.0239/HTNA/2 Rev2 dated 01.06.2026 received 3rd June 2026; Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation prepared by GS Ecology reference ECO3839b dated 4th August 2025 received 21st August 2025; Biodiversity Net Gain metric received 22nd January 2025. Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.
3.	Lighting design strategy for light sensitive biodiversity No lighting associated with the development hereby permitted shall be installed until a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall: a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority. Reason: Bats, badgers and otters are sensitive to light pollution. The introduction of artificial light might mean such species are disturbed and/or discouraged from using their breeding and resting places, established flyways or foraging areas. Such disturbance can constitute an offence under relevant wildlife legislation. The condition is also necessary to protect the rural character and dark skies within the landscape. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies SP8 and SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.
4.	Construction Environmental Management Plan No extension of the hard surfacing area and/or extension of the boundary treatments hereby permitted shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include the following: (a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities. (b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”. (c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements). (d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features. (e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works. (f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.

	(g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person. (h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs. The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: To avoid harm to protected species during demolition/construction and preparatory operations. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041. A pre-commencement condition is required because the CEMP will need to be adhered to throughout construction.
5.	Restrictions on operations involving invasive non-native species No extension of the hard surfacing area and/or extension of the boundary treatments hereby permitted shall take place until an invasive non-native species protocol has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, detailing the containment, control and removal of Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam on site. The measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme. Reason: It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part 2 of the Act. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam is included within this schedule. All Japanese Knotweed waste (the plant itself or material containing its rhizomes) is classed as a controlled/special waste and therefore needs to be disposed of in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environmental Protection Act Duty of Care Regulations 1991. The submission of a method statement, to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority by condition, is to ensure that an adequate means of eradicating or containing the spread of the plant is considered and thereafter implemented to prevent further spread of the plant which would have a negative impact on biodiversity and existing or proposed landscape features. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041. A pre-commencement condition is required because measures may need to take place throughout the construction phase.
6.	Biodiversity Gain Condition No development, demolition, earth moving shall take place until a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Metric dated 24th July 2025 prepared by GS Ecology and shall include: i. information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat; ii. the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat; iii. the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat; iv. any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development; v. any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.

	The approved Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A pre-commencement condition is required because the habitat and management arrangements need to be determined before existing habitats are affected.
7.	Habitat Creation Management and Monitoring Plan (HCMMP) Prior to the commencement of the development the HMMP shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The HMMP shall include: i. Summary of Habitat Proposal and Plans providing the biodiversity baseline assessment against which BNG outcomes are assessed and monitored; ii. Site Context Photos iii. Retention and Protection Measures Map iv. Management plan aims and objectives; v. Design Principles Informed by Baseline Information vi. a programme detailing the long-term phases of the management the number of years to achieve and then maintain the BNG targets; vii. Habitat targets. Habitat creation, enhancement condition management targets and prescriptions. viii. Habitat Creation, Enhancement and Management – Risk Register and Remedial Measures ix. A monitoring strategy and schedule to inform decisions about management, whether assessing progress towards the BNG targets is on track and whether changes to management are required to achieve the targets to include methods and intervals of reporting and adaptive management. x. If management is not delivering the biodiversity outcomes, or is deemed unlikely to (on the basis of trajectory of change in condition and known time to target condition), changes in the management regime shall be agreed in writing and implemented to deliver a successful outcome. xi. Evidence of legal, financial, governance and practical arrangements for the long-term delivery and management of BNG measures. The approved HCMMP will be implemented in accordance with the approved details. Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A pre-commencement condition is required because the habitat and management arrangements need to be determined before existing habitats are affected.
8.	Soft landscaping (Prior Approval) No extension of the hard surfacing area and/or extension of the boundary treatments hereby permitted shall take place until a detailed soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft

	landscaping scheme shall include detailed plans, planting and retention schedule, programme of works, and any other supporting information. All soft landscaping works shall be completed in accordance with the approved soft landscaping scheme within the first planting season following commencement of the hard surfacing. Any trees, shrubs, plants or hedges planted in accordance with the approved scheme which are removed, die, or become diseased or become seriously damaged within five years of completion of this completion of the approved soft landscaping scheme shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees, shrubs or hedges of a similar size and species to that originally approved. Reason: Landscaping is an integral element of achieving high quality design. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies SP7, SP8 and SP10 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041, and the Quality Design SPD.
9.	Sustainable Drainage measures No extension of the hard surfacing area and/or extension of the boundary treatments hereby permitted shall take place until details of sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall: a) Incorporate the implementation of Sustainable Drainage methods (SuDS) in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS (2015), the SuDS Manual C753 (2015) and the WBC SuDS Supplementary Planning Document (2018) with particular emphasis on Green SuDS that provide environmental/biodiversity benefits and water re-use; b) Include run-off calculations based on current rainfall data models, discharge rates (based on 1 in 1 year greenfield run-off rates), and infiltration and storage capacity calculations for the proposed SuDS measures based on a 1 in 100 year storm +40% for climate change. If not achievable, evidence must be provided and a suitable rate agreed with the LLFA. c) Provide a Maintenance Plan for the proposed drainage system over its lifetime (100 years for residential, 60 years for commercial). The above sustainable drainage measures shall be implemented in accordance with a timetable to be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority as part of the details submitted for this condition. The sustainable drainage measures shall be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details thereafter. Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner; to prevent the increased risk of flooding; to improve and protect water quality, habitat and amenity and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system can be, and is carried out in an appropriate and efficient manner. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy SP6 of the West Berkshire Local Plan review 2023-2041, Part 4 of Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (2006) and SuDS Supplementary Planning Document (2018). A pre-condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; sustainable drainage measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place

10.	Maximum Storage Height All materials, goods, equipment or containers shall only be stacked or deposited on the areas of the site defined as Open Air Storage on Drawing No PSM/PL/100 Rev A received 18th August and shall not exceed six metres in height. Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, and to clarify the extent of the permission. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies SP1, SP7, SP8, and DM35 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.
11.	Removal of office building The office building shown on Drawing No. PSM/PL/100 Rev A (received 18th August 2025), shall be removed in its entirety and the land restored to its former condition within 6 months of the date of this permission. Reason: To clarify the extent of the planning permission, and to ensure that the unauthorised building is removed to protect the character and appearance of the area. This condition applied in accordance with Policies SP1, SP7, SP8, and DM35 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.
12.	Use restriction The premises shall be used for and for no other purpose (including any purpose in Class B8 Storage and distribution of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification. Reason: To clarify the extent of the planning permission across the application site. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies SP17, SP19 and DM35 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.

Informatives

1	Proactive This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has secured and accepted what is considered to be a development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
2	Biodiversity Net Gain The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be West Berkshire District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed below.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

If the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases, the modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

In summary: Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun (the overall plan), and before each phase of development may be begun (phase plans).

EXEMPTIONS AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The following are the statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

1. The application for planning permission was made before 12 February 2024.

2. The planning permission relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) applies.

3. The planning permission was granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and
(i) the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates* was granted before 12 February 2024; or
(ii) the application for the original planning permission* to which the section 73 planning permission relates was made before 12 February 2024.

4. The permission which has been granted is for development which is exempt being:

4.1 Development which is not 'major development' (within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) where:

- i) the application for planning permission was made before 2 April 2024;
- ii) planning permission is granted which has effect before 2 April 2024; or
- iii) planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where the original permission to which the section 73 permission relates* was exempt by virtue of (i) or (ii).

4.2 Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:

- i) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and

ii) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

4.3 Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

4.4 Development of a biodiversity gain site, meaning development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the Biodiversity Gain Planning condition which applies in relation to another development, (no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee).

4.5 Self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- i) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- ii) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- iii) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

4.6 Development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high speed railway transport network (High Speed 2) comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

* "original planning permission means the permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates" means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions are section 73 planning permissions.

IRREPLACEABLE HABITAT

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

THE EFFECT OF SECTION 73D OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

If planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) and a Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in relation

	to the previous planning permission ("the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan") there are circumstances when the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition subject to which the section 73 planning permission is granted. Those circumstances are that the conditions subject to which the section 73 permission is granted: i) do not affect the post-development value of the onsite habitat as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan, and ii) in the case of planning permission for a development where all or any part of the onsite habitat is irreplaceable habitat the conditions do not change the effect of the development on the biodiversity of that onsite habitat (including any arrangements made to compensate for any such effect) as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan.
3	Great Crested Newts Any trenches left overnight should be covered or provided with ramps to prevent Great Crested Newts from becoming trapped. - o Any building material should be stored in pallets or on an area of hardstanding to discourage Great Crested Newts from using them as shelter. - o Any demolition materials should be stored in skips or similar containers rather than in piles on the ground and should be removed from the site each day where possible.