



Design and Access Statement

Address: Land South of Conkwell Grange at Conkwell BA2 7FD

Proposal: Erection of a polytunnel and associated landscaping

Date: December 2025

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been produced by WBC Group on behalf of Mrs & Mr Partridge to support the application for erection of a polytunnel. This document explains the key design principles that have been used to develop the scheme. It should be read in conjunction with the following drawings and documents submitted as part of the application:

- (3)001 Location and Block Plans
- (3)002 Polytunnel plan & Elevations
- Appendix 1. Proposed planting and hedgerow development
- Appendix 2. Polytunnel specifications
- Appendix 3. Photographic view schedule

Pre-Application Engagement

A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Wiltshire Council under reference **ENQ/2022/00904** on **26 July 2022**. The advice provided by the Local Planning Authority has informed the preparation of this full planning application, particularly in relation to the siting, scale and landscape impact of the proposed polytunnel.

The proposal has been developed to respond positively to that advice and to ensure the development remains discreet, proportionate and appropriate to its Green Belt and Special Landscape Area setting.

The principle of a small-scale agricultural structure was not objected to in the pre-application advice.

Site Overview

This application relates to an area of land located on Winsley Hill accessed from an existing vehicle gate from Blackberry Lane. The application site is located within the West Wiltshire Green Belt, within a Special Landscape Area, just outside the Cotswold Area of Outstanding National Beauty. The application site also falls within the recreational impact zone of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation for bats.

This application refers to a parcel of land south of Conkwell Grange, Conkwell, Limpley Stoke, Wiltshire BA2 7FD, which has been owned and cared for since September 2019 by the applicant Mr Les Partridge. The land is used as a smallholding

or hobby farm by Mr Partridge, where he grows mainly fruit in the smaller field, while the larger field is currently used for harvesting hay.

Fruit and vegetable produce is grown using organic methods as Mr Partridge has a keen interest in nature conservation and the welfare of wildlife. The yield of the smallholding is not currently used for commercial purposes and serves to supply Mr Partridge and his family and friends only, and the land is worked by Mr Partridge and his family without employees. This is an important point as the access to the land is unsuitable for daily entry by more than one or two vehicles, thereby rendering the land unsuited to most commercial uses.

Description of the proposal

This application is for the erection of a polytunnel in a discreet area of the smaller field which will be generally screened from view by established hedgerows, as demonstrated by the photographic surveys included (refer to Appendix 3)

The installation of a polytunnel will greatly increase the length of the growing season, as well as the quality and range of produce able to be grown, as the ground in the smaller field is often quite boggy

In considering this application, please also consider that this land is most suited to use as a smallholding and therefore requires support as such, and that Mr Partridge's interventions on this land have heretofore been of a productive, unobtrusive and respectful nature, as noted on a previous visit by a Wiltshire Council Planning officer [ref 20/00828/ENF].

Planning History

The online records for this site show previous planning history.

Application Reference: 17/04391/FUL

Description of Proposal: Erection of an equipment store and propagation greenhouse, and associated landscaping works

Decision: Approve with Conditions

Decision Date: 17/07/2017

Planning Policy Context

- 2015 adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), especially core policies namely;
 - CP2 - Delivery Strategy
 - CP7 Bradford on Avon Community Area (Winsley)
 - CP50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - CP51 – Landscape
 - CP57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
 - CP60 - Sustainable Transport
 - CP61 - Transport and Development
- Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan 2014 - 2039 November 2015
- The 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Proposal and Impact

Principle of development

The proposed development comprises an addition to agricultural land within the established agricultural use area of the holding and in close proximity to existing agricultural development. The proposed polytunnel is for agricultural use therefore falls within acceptable development exceptions within Green Belt.

Whilst the proposal would have some impact on openness, due to its scale, siting, close relationship with existing development and the local topography, it is considered that this would be minimal.

Appearance

The proposed polytunnel would be used for horticultural purposes and the proposed use is appropriate within this rural location and within the confines of the application site which contains existing buildings of a similar nature. The polytunnel would be of a simple design which would reflect its function. The building would be 18.3m in length, 2.3m high and 3.2m wide, constructed of steel arches with cross braces covered in polythene sheeting and would be secured within a soil trench (refer to Appendix 2).

The polytunnel would not be permanently fixed and could easily be removed on the cessation of any agricultural use, in the interests of protecting the rural character of the area.

Due to the topography of the land and screening on the boundaries from hedging, trees and bushes, the site is not particularly visible or prominent in the wider landscape. Any views across the site would be long ranging, against a backdrop of trees and hedges, and the tunnel would not appear as an isolated or visually jarring structure.

Considering the size, design and positioning of the polytunnel, combined with the topography of the site, and screening on the boundaries, it is considered that the development would not detract from the setting of the special landscape area.

Ecology

The application site lies within the recreational impact zone of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for bats. This matter was considered as part of the pre-application enquiry with Wiltshire Council.

The proposed development would not involve the removal or disturbance of the existing hedgerows and would therefore result in minimal disruption to existing boundary treatments. As such, the proposal would not result in a net loss of biodiversity, in accordance with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The proposed polytunnel will not be lit at night and will not give rise to increased activity that would result in disturbance to bats or other protected species associated with the SAC.

The proposed planting of native species (refer to Appendix 1), together with ongoing organic management practices, will help to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site and will be beneficial to commuting bats and other wildlife.

Access

There are no changes proposed to the existing vehicular access as part of this application, and it is not anticipated that the proposed use of the polytunnel would introduce any additional vehicle movements to the site.

Conclusion

The proposed development comprising one agricultural structure can be accommodated on the site without detriment to the wider landscape character and is a form of development that is compliant with Green Belt policy.

The application proposals have been carefully formulated to support the applicant's smallholding plan. When the land was purchased by the applicant in 2019, a previous tree planting plan granted permission to the previous owner had been actioned however the trees and various plants had failed to thrive possibly due to neglect during the sale process.

Mr Partridge has revived this plan and has replanted the areas in question and hopes to rejuvenate the hedgerows around the land in order to encourage wildlife and reduce soil erosion, in line with the goals of the woodland trust.

Mr Partridge would like to note that he has invested significant time and financial resources to improve the productivity, biodiversity, and appearance of the land in keeping with the surrounding properties and land. As custodian of this smallholding, he has also made efforts to be amenable to neighbouring landowners and considers himself a good neighbour.