

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09656
APPLICATION TYPE:	Planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Purlieus House, Minety, Malmesbury, SN16 9RP
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a Polytunnel
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

SITE AND PROPOSAL

Purlieus House is an agriculturally tied dwelling accessed off the B4040 approximately 0.3km south west of Minety. To the north of the dwelling is an arrangement equestrian buildings, associated yard, workshop/garage and riding arena. The main access to the associated land is to the west of the house.

The site is not located within any defined settlement boundary and is therefore considered to be within the open countryside for planning purposes. With regard to policy constraints, the site is not subject to any landscape or heritage constraints. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is not identified as being at risk of ground or surface water flooding.

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a multi span polytunnel, comprising 3 hooped bays, measuring 19m in width and 22m in depth. The structure is to be erected on the footprint of the existing riding arena. It is the intention to use the polytunnels for propagation in connection with the applicant's horticulture business 'Hortico Plant Centre' which operates from a site in Sherston.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Purlieus House and Purlieus Farm are subject to a number of planning applications. The following applications are the most relevant to the determination of this application

Purlieus Farm

N/84/01754 - Outline for agricultural workers dwelling. Approved with conditions

N.94.0340.OL -Outline for erection of agricultural workers dwelling. Approved with conditions and S106 Agreement

N.94.0861.F - Agricultural dwelling. Approved with conditions and S106 Agreement

Purlieus House

N/03/00867/FUL - Conservatory. Approved with conditions

N/05/02278/COU - Erection of four stables, tack - room, feed- room, hay-store, garden store & garage block and change of use of land to equestrian for private use only. Approved with conditions

N/07/00059/FUL - Erection of implement store / menage for equestrian purposes. Approved with conditions

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 61 Transport and Development
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Charlton Parish Council: No Objection.

Wiltshire Council Highways: No Objection

Wiltshire Council Archaeology: No comment

Wiltshire Council Ecology: No comment

REPRESENTATIONS

None received

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Design and Visual Impact
- Access and Parking
- Residential Amenity
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

The site is located outside any limits of development and therefore in the open countryside for the purposes of planning policy. In this case the polytunnel is required to support the

applicants existing horticulture business operated from their site in Sherston. Use of land in rural areas for agricultural purposes including horticulture is entirely appropriate.

WCS Core Policy 34. 'Additional employment land' seeks to promote modern agricultural practices and appropriate diversification of the rural economy and the NPPF looks to encourage business in rural areas, including outside settlement limits. Accordingly, the principle of new structures which are proportionate to the scale of operation for a rural based business may be considered acceptable.

Design and Visual Impact

WCS Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, elevational design, materials amongst other things. Core Policy 51 expects development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. The NPPF expects a good standard of design and decisions to ensure the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes.

Although not covered by any landscape policy designations, the application site is located within the open countryside and the impact of the development upon the rural character of the area has been considered. The submitted plans demonstrate the polytunnel to be of a typical metal framed/polythene design comprising 3 hooped bays, measuring 19m in width and 22m in depth. The new structure will be erected on the former riding arena which measures 40m by 25m.

The polytunnel may be visible in public vantage points, particularly from the right of way CHAR9 and HANK 15 to the west. It is unlikely to appear in prominent views from the B4040 given the level of vegetation bordering the road. It is important to consider that polytunnels are not an uncommon feature within the countryside, fundamentally their purpose is to grow products for agriculture or forestry which are less likely to occur on any significant scale within urban areas. Although changing the character of the site from a low profile riding arena, it cannot be considered wholly uncharacteristic of a modern agricultural landscape. Furthermore, the structure would be seen against the backdrop of other farm buildings in proximity. It is recognised that the countryside is a working environment which needs to remain productive and competitive and this is reflected by the aims of WCS Core Policy 34. As such, it is necessary that any visual harm should be weighed against the necessary productivity of the land.

It is acknowledged that the proposed development would have some visual impact on the countryside, however this would be mitigated by the chosen position of the polytunnel being at lower level and partially screened by existing vegetation. On balance, the visual impact of the development is considered to be offset by the long-term economic and environmental benefits of supporting a rural based business. Accordingly, and subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy 34, 51 & 57 to the WCS and to the aims of the NPPF.

Access and Parking

WCS Core Policy 61 requires proposals to be capable of being served by safe access to the highway network. Core Policy 64 seeks to ensure compliance with parking standards set out in the Local Transport Plan. The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The site has existing access onto the B4040, a classified section of public highway subject to a speed limit of 50mph. There are no proposals to alter the existing access to the public highway as a result of the application. There is ample space within the curtilage to enable loading and turning for delivery vehicles. The polytunnel is stated as additional growing space for a horticultural business run by the applicant from a main site in Sherston. The application seeks permission for a polytunnel and does not propose any other change of use, including to allow for visiting customers or sales to take place from the application site. A condition would be required to restrict sales to the public from site in the interests of highways safety, accessibility as well as residential amenity.

Subject to appropriately worded conditions preventing retail sales from the site, the proposal would not result in any significant intensification in use of the access. It is not considered that the proposals would result in detriment to the surrounding highway network and therefore it is recommended that no highway objection be raised.

Residential Amenity

WCS Core Policy 57 seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties. The NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development there are no concerns in respect of amenity for existing or future residents. The polytunnel is fairly significant in scale and may be visible in wider views towards the site, including from residential properties. If lighting is used internally, the polytunnel may also be visible at night. Given the level of separation involved, the structure is a sufficient distance to ensure there is no harm to outlook and it will not appear overbearing to any nearby residents. For the same reason the proposal would not result in overshadowing or loss of privacy. Any activity taking place in polytunnel would also occur at a significant distance from residential properties and so any unacceptable level of disturbance is unlikely to result. As discussed above, a condition would be required to limit commercial activity, in particular to prevent customers visiting the site and sales taking place. This would ensure the level of noise and activity at the site remains at an acceptable level.

Overall, the proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts in terms of impact to residential amenity. The proposal is compliant with Core Policy 57 and the NPPF in this respect.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Core Policy 50 expects development proposals to demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value. All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development. In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10% unless exempt.

The structure is to be erected on an existing riding arena largely covered in sand and would

not result in any impact to existing habitats or protected species. In respect of statutory BNG, The development does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25m² of on-site habitat (or 5m of linear habitat). As such the development falls below the threshold for mandatory BNG and there would be no to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021. There is no conflict with WCS CP50.

CONCLUSION

The site is located outside any limits of development and therefore in the open countryside for the purposes of planning policy. However, the proposal is for development relating to horticulture and intended to support the applicants existing horticulture business, which is an appropriate activity in the countryside. The scale of the new polytunnel is fairly substantial and whilst there would be some visual intrusion into the countryside, this is outweighed by the benefits of supporting a rural based business. Subject to the imposition of appropriately worded planning conditions to limit the level of commercial activity and to control lighting the proposed development is acceptable and would not cause unacceptable impact upon the amenities of local residents, the landscape or ecology of the locality. The highways impacts are also acceptable. For these reasons, the proposal will meet the requirements of policies CP34, CP50, CP51, CP57 & CP61 to the Wiltshire Core Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

 Location Plan LPC 6250 EX 01
 (received 16 March 2026)

 Existing Site Plan LPC 6250 EX 02
 Proposed Site Plan LPC 6250 PR 01
 Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations LPC 6250 PR 02
 (received 9 December 2025)

 REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

 REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 3 There shall be no visiting members of the public to the site and no retail sales of any kind from the site.

 REASON: In the interests of residential amenity, highways safety and in encouraging sustainable forms of development.
- 4 No external lighting shall be installed on-site until plans showing the type of light appliance, the height and position of fitting, illumination levels and light spillage in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals in

their publication "The Reduction of Obtrusive Light" Guidance Note 01/21 (reference GN01/21), have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved lighting shall be installed and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details and no additional external lighting shall be installed.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimise unnecessary light spillage above and outside the development site.

Informative

Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

Informative

The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.