

SRE ASSOCIATES LTD

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Ref: 4/25/2241/0F1

08 September 2025

Chris Harrison
Principal Planning Officer - Development Management
Cumberland Council
The Market Hall Market Place
Whitehaven
CA28 7JG

Application Number: 4/25/2241/0F1

Woodland Nurseries, Stamford Hill, Lowca, Whitehaven

Erection of new glasshouse for plant production facility as an extension to existing nursery, with associated drainage and landscaping

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your email regarding the above application on 04 September.

Please find below responses in relation to the points raised in the representations received regarding the Planning Application:

Existing and proposed employment:

All of the staff at the business are full-time employees, there are currently no part time employees. The business does also employ seasonal workers, but they are still full time. Woodland Nurseries on average employed 45 people full time in 2024, and this would likely increase to around 55 if this application is approved.

Vehicle movements in operation:

Vehicle movements would be very similar to the existing situation, as the business is currently in the process of up grading the current fleet from trucks that carry 26 trollies to articulated trucks that carry 43 trollies. These particular trucks are de rated from 44 ton to 34 ton as the nursery products are a light load, and do not require such a high gross weight. All these have road friendly suspension.

Vehicle movements during construction:

The first phase of the construction process would be levelling the site, which would involve approx. 4 to 5 machines brought to site, including excavator's, bulldozers and dump trucks. It is likely that these machines would be on site approx. 4 weeks (depending on the weather) and then removed from site upon the completion of that process. Constructing the foundations would involve approx. 5 concrete mixers per day for about 6 days again, weather dependant. The steel and glass for the whole glasshouse would be delivered on around 14 trucks which would arrive after the foundations are complete. These deliveries would be spread over minimum 4 weeks as the steel and aluminium frame is constructed before any glass is required to be delivered.

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Working/Operating hours:

The staff working times are from 7am to 6pm, and no changes are proposed to this. In summer when needed during busier times, some staff may stay back until 8pm when required. The loading of trucks is restricted from 7am to 10pm as per the applicant's operator's license, and it is very rare that any truck even in the busiest times is ever loaded after 8pm. Where the trucks are loaded and unloaded will remain the same as existing, which is not near the proposed development of this application.

Ownership/Maintenance of Stamford Hill Road:

The ownership of Stamford Hill is unknown. The trucks from Woodlands Nurseries do not use this road for access and never have done (even though they would have legal right to do so). The Council have recently erected a sign at each end Stamford Hill saying unsuitable for HGV use, which may indicate it is under Council ownership, or maintenance.

Noise emissions:

The development should provide an overall reduction in noise levels, as there is no noise made from the plants growing in a glasshouse. At present the field produces grass which has tractors working in it putting on fertilizer, spraying herbicides, spreading slurry, mowing grass and making silage, without any time restrictions. If the proposed application is approved, all farming activity will stop and therefore noise emissions from the current field will reduce.

Light emissions:

There is no internal growth lighting in any of the existing glasshouses, nor will there be in the proposed one. There is no external lighting planned on the proposed glasshouse and on the previous application it was a condition that there was no external lighting allowed. There are internal work lights to allow work to continue in the winter months, and for use in case of emergencies i.e. climate control failures etc.

Use of chemical/pesticides:

There will be chemicals used in the proposed glasshouse which are all used under the legal regulations that go along with them. Less chemicals are being used as biological treatments are becoming available to replace chemicals. The site produces bedding plants which are regarded as a short-term crop, some being turned around in 3 weeks thus not needing any chemicals. Any that are used are applied with very low volume spray and are only applied to where the crop is and nowhere else, they are applied at only 1meter above the crop which only falls downward and lands on the crop none leaks into the air as all water droplets go downward, inside the building. None is applied to ground not containing crop as there is no point so none can escape from the ground or anywhere else.

Industrial/Commercial Process and Machinery:

The glasshouse is classed as in agricultural building not an industrial one. Irrigation will be fitted inside the glasshouse which travels silently backwards and forwards along the length of the glasshouse, any other ancillary equipment already exists in the current glasshouse to which the proposed one is an extension of.

Rationale For Development:

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A representation received in support states:

Expanding the business is essential to meet the growing demand from suppliers who rely on a consistent and high-quality supply of plants. As interest in the business's horticultural products increases, suppliers are placing larger and more frequent orders, expecting reliable volume and availability throughout the year. Without additional growing space, the business risks falling short of this demand, potentially losing valuable contracts and damaging long-standing relationships. The new glasshouse will provide the capacity needed to scale production, ensuring the business can fulfil larger orders and maintain its reputation for quality and reliability in a competitive market.

This representation covers the justification for the application accurately, and is one of the many letters of support for the proposed glasshouse from the locality.

Crossing of Cycle Way:

The proposed development will operate in the same way as it has for the last 5 years since the previous development was constructed – this is an extension to that existing glasshouse. There are 3 CCTV cameras, which provide 24hr surveillance on this crossing. Because of false allegations of alleged incidents, Woodlands Nurseries have had visits from Chris Harrison (Cumberland Council Planning Department), Micheal Robinson (Cumberland Highways Authority), from the police, and from the HSE. All of the above have agreed that everything has been undertaken in the correct manner, and in accordance with the planning approval and its conditions.

Visibility splays were cleared and formed, signs erected to warn of vehicles crossing etc. There have never been any incidents, which proves the crossing is very safe in its current format. Before the existing glasshouse was constructed, this crossing has been the access to the farmland since before the railway line was built in the 1890's. The footpath/cycle way now takes the route of the old railway line.

We note that there are no objections from the statutory consultees, with the exception of the Parish Council. It should be noted that they have objected to every application that has been submitted on the Woodlands Nurseries site by the applicant, which have all subsequently been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Please let me know if you have any queries on the above or the attached, or require anything further.

Kind regards,

Simon Blacker MRTPI
SRE Associates