

From: Henry Brown <henry@theplanninglab.com>
Sent: 28 April 2026 09:24:16 UTC+01:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <katherine.williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: DM/26/0588 - Havelock Farm, Wakehurst Place, Selsfield Road, Ardingly

Hi Katherine

Thanks for sending this through. The DAS had a page on Venlo glasshouses. This includes photo precedents - ours will look, for all intents and purposes, identical:

GLASSHOUSE SYSTEM - VENLO

Meeting the functional requirements of the brief

The Glasshouses are functional growing spaces that support the horticultural science, conservation and research work undertaken at RBG Kew Wakehurst. The new facilities will provide a range of environs, with varying levels of compartmentalisation and control required for the relevant research work/ These Glasshouses will be precisely controlled (for temperature, lighting and humidity), highly contained growing environments capable of replicating temperate, alpine and tropical conditions.

There are four Glasshouses proposed within the development, of varying size and orientation. However, all four structures will read coherently, and visually across the site as one family of buildings, with the same architectural articulation. They are designed for the maximum practicality and functionality to meet growing requirements.

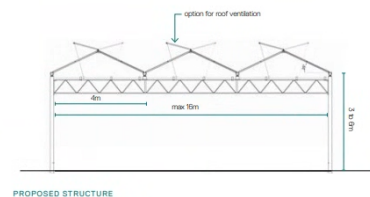
Proposed propriety system - Venlo

As operational science, conservation and research facilities, the indoor criteria is specific and needs to be highly regulated to meet a wide range of conditions, even within each glasshouse. For this reason, amongst others, a propriety system is most suitable. This system is the 'Venlo Greenhouse'.

The Venlo system is an extremely versatile and robust structure, that allows for wide span spaces, simple configuration and separation and rigorously controlled climatic conditions - whilst synchronizing with blind, heating, irrigation systems.

Structure and sizing

The structural grid is regular and available in standard sizes which have been adopted for this project. We have proposed a structural grid of 4m x 3m and 4m x 4.5m. While this dictates the maximum bay (with roof pitch) as 4m, the horizontal structure can span to 16m without columns, allowing more flexible layouts internally within proposed climatic compartments. For visual continuity, it is proposed that the 'solid' book-ends to the glasshouses adopt the same structural grid.



Materials

All the structural members of the greenhouses will be made of galvanized steel. The roof components including the gutters are all aluminium.

Glazing

The glasshouses are designed to allow maximum light transmission, essential for effective plant growth. However, where there are small areas within the glasshouses not for growth, translucent glazing will be utilised. The glazing panels are all articulated within standard sizes, and there will be regularity across all four glasshouses for visual consistency.

Ventilation

Where appropriate to the internal conditions required, ventilation of up to 50% is achievable within the venlo system. All glasshouses shall be provided with natural ventilation via openable roof louvres. These shall be controlled by room CO₂ sensors and temperature sensors to maintain internal environmental conditions required by the plants.

Shading

There are both horizontal and vertical shading components proposed within the propriety system. These will not only assist with light spill, but can make for a more energy efficient Glasshouse. Furthermore they are required for horticultural purposes, to maximise the day-length in the summer months. Blinds are proposed for all four Glasshouses and will operate on automated systems.



PRECEDENTS OF VENLO GLASSHOUSES (ABOVE LEFT IS NURSERY AT RHS WISLEY)



We do have galvanised steel structure and aluminium gutters - but also plastic downpipes, cappings etc... which would be present in all of those photo precedents. The glasshouses are a highly standardised system, and we have not taken steps to downgrade these in terms of the quality of the materials/ finishes.

Page 55 of the approved DAS describes roofs of the solid buildings as follows:

"The roofs of auxiliary buildings will be a metal standing seam, similar to at the Millennium Seed Bank. The metal will have a colour (PVDF) finish rather than a natural one, which will help it longevity, but more importantly will enable the reflectivity to be reduced with a matt surface, and the colour will be darker so that it is more recessive in the landscape than a natural metal finish would be."

That PVDF finish is identical to what our roof panels will have. It's technically a plastic coating but similar to a "PPC" (polyester powder coating) type system that is very commonly used on exterior metalwork. The reason the roofs are not a bare metal panel like zinc is because of the potential for metals to leach into the rainwater that's being harvested. It's very important for RBGK that the rainwater which they will use to irrigate the collections is as natural/ clean as it can be.

Hopefully this helps but please let me know if there's anything else we can send through.

Kind regards

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From: Katherine Williams <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>

Date: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 at 16:42

To: Henry Brown <henry@theplanninglab.com>

Subject: DM/26/0588 - Havelock Farm, Wakehurst Place, Selsfield Road, Ardingly

Hi Henry,

Please see the attached responses from the Conservation Officer, who requires further information and raises concerns regarding some of the proposed materials.

Kind Regards

Katherine Williams BSc (Hons) MSc

Senior Planning Officer

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