



Planning Statement

PROPOSAL:

**CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL
FIELD ACCESS AND PLANTING OF
REPLACEMENT FRONTAGE HEDGE**

**RE-SUBMISSION FOLLOWING
WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION
REF. DC/26/0112**

SITE:

**LAND AT GRID REF 512000 114372
ROCK ROAD, WASHINGTON
WEST SUSSEX RH20 3BQ**

APPLICANT:

MR & MRS DUNNE

The Proposal

Planning consent is sought for a field access from Rock Road. The field in question (OS Field No. 0035) lies between the properties Appledore Farm to the north and Ceres to the south. The field is part of the property Crofters, a dwelling neighbouring Ceres.

The new entrance is located in a roughly central position on the field frontage to maximise vehicular visibility in both directions and to avoid street furniture (telegraph poles) and existing verge trees.

An access having a width of 4.5 metres is proposed. The first 5 metres would be constructed using an MOT Type 1 sub-base with a self-binding gravel dressing on top.

A five-bar gate would be erected 10 metres into the site and the access defined by a post and rail fence between the gate and the front boundary of the site. This is to enable agricultural vehicles entering the site to be clear of the highway before the gate is opened.

At present, the front boundary of the site is marked by a laurel hedge, and this is to be replaced with a mixed hedge of native species. This is detailed on the accompanying Landscaping Schedule.

Entrance radii of 6 metres are proposed on the new crossover. This is considered sufficient for the small tractors typically requiring access to the field.

Submitted drawings indicate the available visibility splays onto the new crossover, and these are shown as 2.4 metres x 71 metres to the north and 2.4 metres x 113 metres to the south. These splays are plotted on the submitted drawings and are taken to a point 0.5 metres out from the nearside highway edge.

Submitted drawings indicate the available visibility splays on the existing agricultural access (shared with the residential property Ceres) are 2.4 metres x 9 metres to the north and 2.4 metres x 71 metres to the south. These splays are plotted on the submitted drawings but reproduced overleaf are photographs of these splays taken at a x distance of 2.4 metres.

This part of Rock Road has a 50mph speed limit. This would normally necessitate the need for splays of 2.4 metres x 160 metres.



Figure 1 – Existing access north splay at 2.4 metres



Figure 2 – Existing access south splay at 2.4 metres

Reasons For The New Access

The owner of the field (Mr J Dunne) already has a field access at the southern end of the road frontage. This, nonetheless, has very limited visibility to the north which is restricted by a tree in the highway verge (see **Figure 1**).

The new access is therefore desired for safety and convenience purposes.

Pre-Application Consultation

This proposal was the subject of a Pre-Application Consultation with the Planning Authority (Horsham District Council). Their response is set out in Appendix 1 of this statement.

Relevant Planning History

The proposed access was the subject of application ref. DC/26/0112. This has been withdrawn following discussions with the Planning Officer.

In principle, the access and landscaping proposed under this earlier application were acceptable to both Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council as the Highway Authority.

However, the application became embroiled in the Biodiversity Net Gain regulations as a result of the frontage hedge having been replaced with a laurel hedge back in 2021. This loss of habitat within this time frame essentially triggered BNG requirements. These requirements changed on the 6th August 2026 with BNG no longer applicable to sites of less than 0.2 hectares.

Unfortunately, this change in the legislation did not retrospectively apply to pre-existing applications and this necessitated a withdrawal and re-submission.

Evaluation

Re-siting the access further north on the field frontage balances out the available visibility and produces a safer crossover which would be more convenient to use. It would be engineered to allow for easy ingress and egress with a small tractor, trailer and mower in order to maintain the land.

The new access would be used for solely agricultural purposes by the applicant. It is estimated that the new access would experience one or two traffic movements per day, but this would increase to, perhaps, four or five movements per day during the short period in summer when a hay crop would be taken.

The access would also be used once a year by National Power Networks to maintain overhead power lines. This usually involves cutting back tree and vegetation growth from interfering with the power lines. Access would be required by larger vehicles and a wood-chipper.

The new access would be far safer and more convenient to use because of far better visibility being available out onto Rock Road. This is demonstrated in the photographs below.



Figure 3 – South splay from proposed new access point showing straight alignment of the road



Figure 4 – Proposed splay looking north from new crossover

The new access would not impact on rural amenities or compromise highway safety. Whilst the available splays do not meet full standards, they are, nonetheless, significant improvements on those available on the existing agricultural access.

In fact, the north splay on this existing access is dangerously sub-standard. The applicant currently has to guide agricultural vehicles out of the site by standing on the opposite side of the road.

The existing field access would be retained solely as a domestic crossover to serve the property Ceres. The Highway Engineer at WSCC did enquire whether this crossover could be closed, but this is not possible, because it is the only access available to the property Ceres.

The other advantage with this application is that it secures the re-planting of a mixed native species hedge along the whole of the frontage of the site. This having been removed back in 2021 and replaced with laurel.

Landscaping details are submitted giving plant numbers and species. All planting would be set within the site so as to avoid interference with visibility splays. No planting would take place on the highway verge.

A speed survey has not been undertaken as casual observance of traffic passing the site would seem to indicate that the average speeds are somewhere between 40 and 50mph. The 85th percentile speed gleaned from any survey is therefore unlikely to be significantly below the 50mph speed limit.

This is believed to be a common-sense proposal which will have the effect of improving highway safety by removing agricultural traffic from the existing crossover. This has sub-standard visibility in both directions.

In respect of the northern splay, this visibility is dangerously sub-standard.

Negotiations on the previously submitted application DC/26/0112 have indicated the acceptability of the proposals in both planning and highway terms. Neither Horsham District Council nor West Sussex County Council raised objection to the principle of the development. This re-submission has been caused by changes to BNG legislation.

Whilst this re-submission avoids having to go through the formal BNG procedure it nonetheless secures significant biodiversity gain through the reinstatement of native hedging along the whole of the site.

Appendix 1



**Horsham
District
Council**

Our ref: PE/25/0248

Your ref:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Location: Land at Rock Road Washington West Sussex RH20 3BQ

Details: Creation of field access

Your enquiry has been considered and I can advise as follows:

The pre-application enquiry seeks advice on a proposed new field access from Rock Road. The field lies within the properties Appledore Farm to the north and Ceres to the south. The field forms part of the property Crofters, a dwelling neighbouring Ceres.

Design and Appearance

There is an existing access to the southern end of the road frontage, however, the pre-application statement states that this has limited visibility to the south which is restricted by the brow of the hill on this part of Rock Road. The reason for the re-siting further north is to provide better visibility and safer crossover.

The access would have a width of 4.5 metres, with the first 10 metres constructed using MOT Type 1 sub-base with a self-binding gravel dressing on top. A post and rail gate would be erected at the end of the drive giving a minimum of 10 metre depth from the edge of the carriageway for vehicles to enter the site before opening the gate. It is considered the post and rail gate would be appropriate for the location and match the existing fencing along the road.

A section of hedging will be removed to provide for the new access. It is noted that this would change the visual appearance of the boundary screening along the road, but the planning statement states this would be replaced with new hedging which would help mitigate the potential visual impact.

Highways

Policy 40 of the HDPF deals with sustainable transport and seeks new developments to provide safe and suitable access for all vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horses riders, public transport, and the delivery of goods. Policy 41 which relates to parking requires adequate parking and facilities to be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

The proposed access would be entering onto a main road and providing a vehicle access where there has not been one before. It is noted that a visibility splays plan has been submitted, showing splays of 2.4 metres x 160 metres which may be sufficient. As part of an application, it would need to be evidenced that the proposed access would be safe and West Sussex County Council Highways, as the Local Highways Authority, would be consulted.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) offer a separate pre-application service. This may be useful to understand the impact the proposal may have with a new proposed access, as HDC is not able to fully assess the impact that the development may have on highway and its use.

Further details of which can be found through the following link:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/information-for-developers/pre-applicationadvice-for-roads-and-transport/>

Trees

The pre-application statement states that the construction of the access will require the removal of 4.5 metres of laurel hedging, but otherwise existing frontage hedging can be retained, albeit that it will need to be cut back in parts, insofar as it overhangs the highway verge. The HDC Arboricultural Officer had the following comment to make:

"I can confirm that there are no foreseeable Arboricultural impacts.

The young evergreen/laurel hedging surrounding the field is a recently planted feature that appears to have replaced a former indigenous hedgerow. There is no record of a hedgerow removal notice that necessitated/approved this landscape change. I would refer the applicant to the requirements of The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 in this respect.

The planting of laurel and other evergreen shrubs should be resisted in the countryside due to its suburbanising impact on rural views and landscape character. It would be appropriate to advise the applicant to remove all the laurel plantings and to re-plant with native indigenous hedging."

Should an application be submitted, it would therefore be anticipated that any replanting be of a native indigenous hedging mix.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach introduced under the Environment Act 2021, to ensure that developments and land management leave the natural environment in a better state than it was before. It contributes towards nature recovery by helping to deliver habitat creation and enhancements as part of the design of new development.

There is now a statutory requirement to provide a minimum of 10% BNG on development sites. Further information can be found at: -

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/biodiversity-net-gain>

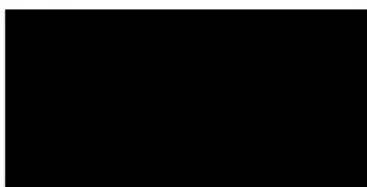
Conclusion

On the basis of the above, it is considered that there is potential for a new access to the site, however, further engagement with WSCC Highways regarding the access is advised, prior to submitting a formal planning application, to establish whether there is potential for an access at this location.

Should an application be submitted, the following documents would be required:

- Location plan
- Block plan
- Elevations (existing and proposed)
- Visibility Splays Plan
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and accompanying BNG Metric

The above comments are given as the opinion of the Case Officer and do not prejudice any outcome of a subsequent application. Should you submit a formal planning application, please quote reference number PE/25/0248 in your submission.



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council implemented a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 1st October 2017.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge placed on new development. The funds raised will help to pay for a wide range of infrastructure to support development across Horsham District.

Most new development which creates net additional floorspace of 100m² or more, or creates a new dwelling, (including permitted development), is potentially liable for the levy.

How does it affect you?

Applications for CIL liable development which are determined on or after 1st October 2017 are required to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (unless the development qualifies for relief or exemption).

Further information and the rates charged by Horsham District Council are set out in the CIL Charging Schedule which can be viewed online at www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/apply/cil

General Consent e.g. Permitted Development

Developments which are permitted by way of a general consent (such as permitted development) may still be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy if they meet the above criteria.

In these circumstances, you must submit a Notice of Chargeable Development (CIL form 5), notify us of the person who will assume liability to pay the CIL and make any applications for relief or exemption, before the development is commenced.