Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/1316
Land at 512000 114372, Rock Road, Washington, West Sussex

DESCRIPTION:

Construction of field access and entrance drive, erection of post and rail fencing and planting of hedge to field frontage.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/26/0112	Construction of field access and entrance drive. Erection of post and rail fencing and planting of mixed deciduous hedging.	Withdrawn Application on 20.08.2026

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is outside any built-up area boundary and is within a countryside location for planning purposes. A new field access is proposed from the east side of Rock Road. The field lies between the properties 'Appledore Farm' to the north and 'Ceres' to the south. The field forms part of the property of 'Crofters'.

There is an existing field access to the southern end of the road frontage, however, the planning statement sets out that this has limited visibility to the south which is restricted by the brow of the hill and vegetation on this part of Rock Road. This part of Rock Road has a 50mph speed limit.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission is sought for a new field access from Rock Road to be located in a roughly central position on the field frontage to provide better vehicular visibility in both directions for a safer crossover, and to avoid street furniture (telegraph poles) and existing verge trees.

The proposed access is a width of 4.5 metres. 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 is proposed to 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.

The planning statement sets out that the new access would be used for solely agricultural purposes by the applicant.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development

Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision

Storrington Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (SSWNP):
Policy 8 - Countryside Protection
Policy 14- Design
Policy 15- Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity
Policy 17- Traffic & Transport

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 16: protected Landscapes
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Arboricultural Officer: No objection

Landscape/Arboriculture: No concerns

WSCC Highways: Advice

The applicant has demonstrated that the access will remain central to the western property boundary. Visibility splays have been demonstrated from a 2.4m set-back distance from the carriageway edge and span to 71m to the north and 113m to the south. The existing access arrangement has been shown as providing 8.6m northbound and 71m southbound. The submitted plans show visibility is achievable within land under the applicants' ownership and within the maintained highway boundary.

It would have been beneficial for a speed survey to have been carried out at this location, to ascertain the 85th percentile speeds at the proposed new access point, The Local Highway Authority has however conducted a site visit to further investigate this proposal.

The LHA notes that the submitted splays do not meet the standard for a road of this speed, however, do overall represent an improvement over the existing arrangement. Although splays in the southern direction do appear to intersect the two trees adjacent to the existing access, it is considered that the improvement to the northern splay takes precedent over this. Vehicles travelling southbound are in the nearside carriageway to the access and therefore would pose most risk to an emerging vehicle. An improved visibility to the north assists vehicles in adjoining the carriageway from this location and as a vehicle edges forward with this lane clear, visibility to the south would become further improved.

Furthermore, visibility works on a “see and be seen arrangement”, While it is important for a static vehicle at the access to be able to view oncoming traffic, it is also important for oncoming vehicles to be able to view an emerging vehicle. Given the straighter nature of this portion of Rock Road, road users are awarded a good envelope of forward visibility, which enables time and opportunity to see a vehicle waiting to join the carriageway and to adjust their speed/path accordingly. The presence of the two trees does not obscure an entire vehicle from view of road users travelling northbound at this point.

The LHA considers too, the infrequent nature of the proposed use of the access, whereby intermittent maintenance will be carried out. Additional movements are not being generated by the overall site and therefore there would be no concern raised in terms of capacity.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

2 letters for Support have been received from 2 addresses, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- Improved visibility and safer conditions for all road users
- Proposed hedgerow would significantly improve the visual appearance and character along Rock Road
- Preservation of local wildlife
- Needed due to proximity of the hill brow

Parish Comments:

None received

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 26 of the HDPF states the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development; development should not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity and should protect the characteristics of the landscape.

Policy 15 of the SSWNP states that development proposals must ensure the green infrastructure assets of the Parishes are protected and maintained, and wherever possible, enhanced. Policy 17 of the SSWNP states that development proposals will be supported provided they can demonstrate that their residual traffic impacts on the local road network are not severe.

The proposal seeks to install a field access to be used solely for agricultural purposes and for the reason of safety and convenience purposes due to the limited visibility of the existing access. The proposal would support the agricultural needs of the land and is not anticipated to increase the level of activity in the countryside. As such, the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to detailed considerations below.

Character, Design and Appearance:

Policy 25 of the HDPF is concerned with the Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

The proposed new access would include a five-bar gate erected 10 metres into the site, where the access would be defined by a post and rail fence between the gate and the front boundary of the site. The existing front boundary of the site is marked by a laurel hedge, and this is to be replaced with a mixed hedge of native species, with planting set within the site so as to avoid interference with visibility splays.

The site is outside any built up area boundary and is a countryside location, however the proposed new access, gate and planting would not appear unusual nor unexpected, and would be reflective of the agricultural setting and overall is acceptable in terms of visual impact.

The introduction of a mixed native hedge in place of the existing laurel hedge would be welcomed and an advisory is recommended that freestanding hedges are recommended to be accompanied by a 2/3 strand galvanised wire and tanalised softwood timber post fence, to BS1722- 2: 2006, erected through the centre of the staggered row of hedge, to prevent access through the site by pedestrians until the hedges are fully established.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The siting and layout of the proposed new access would not be in close proximity to neighbouring properties, and also given the infrequent nature of the proposed use of the access, the resulting relationship with adjoining properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity. It is noted that no neighbouring representations of concern were received during the application process and two letters of support received.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The proposal is for construction of field access and erection of post and rail fencing and planting of hedge at Rock Road Washington. The Local Highway Authority attended a site visit at this location on 28/05/2026 to further assess vehicle behaviour and view the existing and proposed access points. It was noted that vehicle speeds varied between that of the posted limit and those travelling at a lower speed. It was noted that northbound vehicles progressed at a lower speed due to the presence of the humpback bridge further south.

The submitted details have demonstrated that the access will remain central to the western property boundary. Visibility splays have been demonstrated from a 2.4m set-back distance from the carriageway edge and span to 71m to the north and 113m to the south. The existing access arrangement has been shown as providing 8.6m northbound and 71m southbound. The submitted plans show visibility is achievable within land under the applicants' ownership and within the maintained highway boundary.

WSCC Highways as the Local Highways Authority acknowledge that the submitted splays do not meet the standard for a road of this speed, however, do overall represent an improvement over the existing arrangement. Although splays in the southern direction do appear to intersect the two trees adjacent to the existing access, it is considered that the improvement to the northern splay takes precedent over this. Vehicles travelling southbound are in the nearside carriageway to the access and therefore would pose most risk to an emerging vehicle. An improved visibility to the north assists vehicles in adjoining the carriageway from this location and as a vehicle edges forward with this lane clear, visibility to the south would become further improved. Given the straighter nature of this portion of Rock Road, road users are awarded a good envelope of forward visibility, which enables time and opportunity to see a vehicle waiting to join the carriageway and to adjust their speed/path accordingly. The presence of the two trees does not obscure an entire vehicle from view of road users travelling northbound at this point.

For this reason, the proposed development is considered to result in an improvement over the existing situation, albeit it is recognised that the existing access would be retained. It is not considered that the cumulative impact of both accesses would adversely impact the safety or function of the highways network. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the above policies.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The application site is less than 0.2 hectares in area

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered would not undermine the rural qualities of the countryside setting, or result in an increase in intensity of activity or loss of privacy to harmfully impact neighbouring amenity, and is considered compliant to the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Pre-Use Condition**: Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 17 metres northbound and 2.4 metres by 113 metres southbound shall be provided at the approved site vehicular access onto Rock Road in accordance with plan reference D 0825/765/04 D. Once provided, the splays shall thereafter be maintained and kept free of all obstructions over a height of 0.6 metre above adjoining carriageway level or as otherwise agreed.

Reason: In the interests of road safety, visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The approved landscaping/planting scheme as shown on plan reference D 0825/765/04 D and the submitted Planting Schedule shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first use of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 30 years after completion of the development. Any proposed or retained planting which dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved plans and application form.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT
The Applicant is advised that in addition to obtaining planning permission that they must also obtain formal approval from the highway authority to carry out the site access works on the public highway. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a vehicle crossover licence shall be granted. Additional information about the licence application process can be found at the following web page:

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-licences/dropped-kerbs-orcrossovers-for-driveways-licence/

Online applications can be made at the link below, alternatively please call 01243 642105.

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-licences/dropped-kerbs-orcrossovers-for-driveways-licence/vehicle-crossover-dropped-kerb-constructionapplication-form/

NOTE TO APPLICANT
The Applicant is advised that freestanding hedges are recommended to be accompanied by a 2/3 strand galvanised wire and tanalised softwood timber post fence, to BS1722- 2: 2006, erected through the centre of the staggered row of hedge, to prevent access through the site by pedestrians until the hedges are fully established.

NOTE TO APPLICANT
Biodiversity Net Gain Condition
Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements
There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These can be found at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214 of the Planning Practice Guidance, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain.

Irreplaceable habitat
If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/26/1316
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Block plan	Road Opening Dimensions	D 0825/765/03 C Revision A	14.08.2026
Plans	Visibility Existing	D 0825/765/02 D	07.09.2026
Elevation plan	Gate and Post and Rail Fencing	D 0825/765/05	14.08.2026
Location plan		D 0825/765/01 C	14.08.2026
Plans	Visibillity Proposed	D 0825/765/04 D	14.08.2026

Supporting Docs	Planting Schedule	NONE	14.08.2026
Supporting Docs	Application Form	NONE	14.08.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Steve Astles Date: 26.10.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 29.10.2026