

SUPPORTING PLANNING/DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR THE FORMATION OF A TRACK AND HARDSTANDING AT HAZELDENE FARMHOUSE, TURNERS HILL ROAD, EAST GRINSTEAD

1. Introduction

1.1 This statement is produced by Beacon Hill Planning and accompanies plans for the installation of a track and hardstanding at Hazeldene Farmhouse, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead.

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1 The site lies on the northwestern side of the highway and there is an existing gate and access into the land at the point where the new track meets the road. The wider area consists of sporadic residential properties and various rural uses set in wider countryside of fields and woodland.



Existing field gate at proposed access

3. Planning Policy

3.1 The original National Planning Policy Framework was published by Central Government in March 2012 and was an important material consideration in the determination and assessment of all planning applications. In December 2024 the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

3.2 Throughout the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The original Ministerial Foreword highlights that "*sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations*". The opening statement goes on to state that "*Development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay*".

3.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three aspects that comprise this goal:

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

3.4 Achieving sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to): moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature; improving the conditions in which people work; widening the choice of high quality homes; securing high quality design; supporting the transition to a low carbon future; contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution; and improving the health, social and cultural well-being for all.

3.5 The Government's planning policies on design are set out in section 12 of the Framework. The initial paragraph of the section states that *"the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."*

3.6 Paragraph 127 advocates that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

"a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change."

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

4. Relevant Planning History

4.1 Nothing of relevance relating to a new track and hardstanding into this part of the land.

5. The proposal

5.1 Permission is sought for the formation of track from Turners Hill Road, it will be approximately 145 metres in length and end at a hardstanding of some 30m by 20m. It is proposed to lay a Geo tex membrane to the sub-surface, hardcore of about 225mm depth, and finished with type 1 MOT of around 75mm.

6. Planning Assessment

Character and appearance

6.1 The extent of track and hardstanding, which would have a geo-textile membrane and crushed concrete base, would allow for long, heavy farm machinery to traverse the site safely as parts of the land are on a slope. Moreover, an existing access into the property further to the west has become rutted and poached and is not adequate for the types of vehicles needing to use the site.

6.2 The applicant will plant new hedgerows to screen and soften the development from public view, details of which can be agreed by condition. Such tracks and hardstanding are typical features in rural areas and in combination with working farmhouses, agricultural and equine activities. It is therefore submitted that the proposals would not appear unduly incongruous within the context of the countryside and local landscape.



Existing access

Living conditions

6.3 Given the relationships and detachment to existing neighbouring properties, there would be no adverse impacts in respect of noise and disturbance, and no other amenity issues would arise. Appropriate boundary hedgerows would ensure the impacts on surrounding dwellings in respect of activity on site would be minimised.

Access, parking and turning

6.4 Clear highway visibility would be secured in either direction from the existing access to Turners Hill Road; the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in transport terms and meets with local and national policy criteria.

6.5 It should be stressed that some of the farm vehicles have a long wheel base, which can't turn safely due to the narrow road and bad visibility at the existing access. The proposal would allow for turning within the site and visibility would be greatly improved at the new entrance. Consequently, there would not be any

demonstrable harm arising from the scheme and it will not cause any severe impacts to the local network in terms of efficiency and capacity.

Ecology and trees

6.6 The site is currently laid to grass which has limited biodiversity potential. A soft landscaping scheme would be accepted to ensure enhancement of ecological habitats such that no adverse harm to protected species would occur.

6.7 There are no important or significant trees within the immediacy of the developments proposed. The Council's Tree Officer is welcome to visit the site to establish this. If the application would be deemed favourable in all other respects, as above the applicant would be willing to accept planting conditions to increase the potential for the site in arboricultural terms.

Heritage and archaeology

6.8 A walkover has found that local heritage and archaeological assets will remain unaffected by the proposed development, which retain their historical and aesthetic qualities with the proposed development producing 'no harm' on their settings or significance of these assets in accordance with NPPF. In addition, if necessary a programme of Archaeological Investigation would ensure archaeological remains are identified and recorded and can be the subject of an appropriately-worded condition.

7. Summary

7.1 The principle of equestrian development on the site is acceptable and would comprise sustainable development on economic, social and environmental bases.

7.2 The scale of the proposals would be sympathetic to the surrounding character. The use of landscaping would ensure that they blend easily with the existing rural area, and they would not harm the amenities of the adjoining residents in terms of noise and disturbance or other amenity matters.

7.3 The Authority is asked to make contact for any further clarification, and to work with the applicant should any additional alterations be required before determination in accordance with the NPPF.