
Trottscliffe Downs	564130 159900	13.09.2005	TM/05/02831/FL
Proposal:	Formation of new farm access		
Location:	Walnut Tree Farm Addington Lane Trottscliffe West Malling Kent ME19 5DW		
Applicant:	Walnut Tree Farm Limited		

1. Description:

- 1.1 The proposed farm access would be taken from Addington Lane, approx. 55 m south of its junction with Ford Lane between the two sets of speed bumps currently located in the lane. The access would measure 10m wide at its widest point, narrowing to 5.5m wide, and incorporates gates that would be set back 12m from the public highway. The access would serve only the commercial part of the farm. A new fence would be erected between the existing rear garden boundary of Walnut Tree Farmhouse and the annexe. This would prevent farm traffic using the existing vehicular access situated at the junction of Ford Lane and Addington Lane, at the northern end of the site. This access would be used only for vehicle movements related to the existing farmhouse.
- 1.2 The applicant has submitted a statement with the application explaining the rationale behind the application. It states:

“The reason for the application for the new access is to enable vehicles, usually 20 ton 8 wheel lorries, to be able to enter and leave the site safely when delivering animal foodstuffs. Health and safety regulations prevent foodstuffs from being stored at the butchery and therefore they need to be stored at the farm itself. Thus. Delivery vehicles using the lower entrance and for foodstuffs to be stored at the butchery away from the farm is not possible. Moreover, vehicles of this size cannot physically reach the farm from the lower entrance.

In addition, the current access to the farm is very narrow and it does not provide easy access for the general farm implements in use at the farm. Damage to the buildings and walls at the entrance occurs regularly and the new access will prevent these difficulties in the future.”

2. The Site:

- 2.1 The site is located within the settlement confines of Trottscliffe, on the south side of Addington Lane. The site lies within the Trottscliffe Conservation Area (CA), Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Special Landscape Area (SLA).

3. Planning History:

(Most relevant)

3.1 TM/05/01097/AGPN Prior Approval not required 25.04.2005

Agricultural Prior Notification: erection of agricultural building for machinery store, cutting room and chiller.

3.2 TM/00/02023/FL Granted 27.10.2000

Demolition of timber shed, extension to hay barn and relocation of 3 car parking spaces

3.3 TM/97/01388/AGPN Prior Approval not required 18.09.1997

Agricultural Prior Notification: Hay barn

3.4 TM/96/00428/FL Granted 13.06.1996

Conversion of redundant arm workshops into a residential annexe

4. Consultees:

4.1 PC: Objection The Parish Council feels that the road is too narrow at the proposed position for large delivery lorries. They are concerned about the impact on the Listed Building opposite. This is an AONB and Conservation Area and the proposal is not in keeping with the centre of a rural village. The most suitable entrance for lorries to enter and exit Walnut Tree Farm is by the existing gate further down Addington Lane. This would avoid congestion on a narrow stretch of road and protect the very attractive Listed Building opposite the new entrance.

4.2 Kent Highways: The proposal will potentially provide an improved access that will allow safer and easier access to and from the site.

The proposal includes the realignment of the boundary to improve sight lines and is acceptable as is the width of the access.

However, it is normal for gates to be set back 5m for general use, but for farm use the gates would need to be suitably set back to allow the largest vehicle to stand clear of the public highway, whilst the gates are operated. The boundary treatment within the sight line to be reduced to 1.05m in height.

The road fronting the site is within a speed controlled zone, with likely traffic speeds of less than 20mph.

Applicant to be advised to liaise with highway manager regarding construction and

working details. The surfacing to be of a suitable hard surface, however surface water from the site to be dealt with on site and not discharged onto the public highway.

In principle, I raise no objections to this proposal, subject to submission and approval of a revised plan showing the gates being suitably set back to suit the largest vehicles. With heavy farm vehicles the gates may be required to be set back between 10m and 20m.

Revised drawings numbered HH:20:05:114:01:A and HH:20:05:114:02 show access arrangements in more detail and demonstrates that access for the largest vehicle can be achieved and will be an improvement compared to the existing entrance.

Further details: drawings HH:20:05:114:01 C and HH:20:05:114:02 A, now show the proposed gates suitably set back as requested. I would therefore, support this proposal.

4.3 Private Reps (including response to public notices: 7/0X/0S/8R. The reasons for objection are:

- Impact upon highway safety (the entrance would be situated at a narrow point in Addington Lane).
- The driveway would be at right angles to the lane meaning it would have to be much wider than as indicated on the current plan if even the modest sized delivery vehicles are to turn safely into and out of the farm.
- The location of the proposed driveway would exacerbate existing highway congestion in Addington Lane.
- Vehicles entering/leaving the proposed access would damage highway verges, front gardens in adjacent residential properties.
- Duplication of access onto Addington Lane is unnecessary.
- The proximity of the proposed entrance to the neighbouring houses. It would directly face the living room of Orchard House, vehicles using the entrance in hours of darkness would constantly shine headlamps on the house, plus there will be noise and fumes from vehicles using the entrance with engines running and cab doors slamming whilst the gates are being operated.
- Setting the gates 12m back would create a screened slot for criminal vehicles to be hidden whilst crimes are being undertaken.
- The plans are inaccurate as they do not show the accurate position of the speed bumps in Addington Lane.

5. Determining Issues:

- 5.1 The main issues associated with this proposal are the impact upon the safe and free flow of traffic along Addington Lane and the residential amenities of the properties on the opposite side of the Lane to the proposed access.
- 5.2 In terms of the highway issues, Kent Highways are satisfied that the proposed access would be of a sufficient width to enable large vehicles to enter and leave the site safely and would be an improvement compared to the existing access at the junction of Ford Lane and Addington Lane, next to the green, at the northern end of the site. Kent Highways also consider the site lines and position of the proposed gates to now be acceptable. Therefore, notwithstanding the concerns of local residents and the PC, the proposal is considered to be acceptable now in terms of highway safety in light of Kent Highways support for it.
- 5.3 With regard to the issue of amenity, the proposed access would be located directly opposite the front of the dwelling at Orchard House. It is likely that, if allowed, it would effectively become the main access associated with the agricultural unit. The other (lower) access onto Addington Lane is in the current application to remain as serving only the butchery within the farm. The applicant has confirmed in the supporting statement that all deliveries to the farm would be through the proposed new access. Presently, there are no residential properties directly in front of the two existing Farm accesses or as close to them as the Orchard House would be to the proposed access. Whilst the position of the gates has now been moved back from 5m to 12 m from the edge of the highway, the proposal is likely to generate more movements in front of Orchard House, than presently occur. Vehicles entering and leaving the site would be decelerating and/or accelerating away from the site with the associated gear changing and braking noises and vehicles would be idling on the entrance whilst the gates are being operated or while waiting on the highway to turn in or out. During hours of twilight or darkness, headlamps would splash across the front elevation of the dwelling house. I consider that Orchard House is likely to be subject to an increased level of noise and general disturbance than at present. As such, the proposal would, in my opinion, cause more detriment to the residential amenity of Orchard House than currently occurs in the village confines. Under the existing arrangements, no one particular dwelling is as adversely affected by vehicle movements to and from the site (and the general disturbance relating thereto), as could occur if the proposed access were allowed. Whilst the proposal could amount to a betterment in highway terms, I do not consider that this should outweigh the impact it is likely to have upon the amenity of the adjacent residential property.
- 5.4 The proposal would require the removal of part of a hedge that is currently situated behind a close boarded fence that fronts on to Addington Lane. As the hedge is currently obscured by the fence, I do not consider that the proposal would cause detriment to the rural character of the locality, as it would also entail removing a sizeable section of the existing fence as well. The proposal would not, therefore,

cause detriment to the natural beauty of the AONB and SLA. For similar reasons, the proposal would not, in my opinion, fail to preserve the character of the Trottscliffe Conservation.

- 5.5 I note the comments of the local residents regarding the position of the speed humps in relation to the proposed access as drawn on the submitted plans. Having measured this on site, I can confirm that the speed hump to the north of the proposed access is shown to be in the correct position. The other one, to the south is shown to be 36m away from the proposed access. However, on site this distance measured approximately 30m. Whilst the speed hump is closer than as shown on the plan, I do not consider this alters the highway safety considerations of the proposed development. However, I shall seek further advice from Kent Highways on this point and report their comments in a supplementary report.
- 5.6 I note the comments of the neighbour regarding the position of the proposed gates and the creating a safe place for criminals to park their vehicles. However, the driveway in front of the proposed gates would be readily visible from the road and neighbouring residential properties, and as such would not, in my opinion, be a hidden area for criminals to park their vehicles.
- 5.7 In light of the above, I recommend that planning permission be refused.

6. Recommendation:

- 6.1 **Refuse Permission** as detailed in letters dated 08.12.05, 13.01.06, 14.02.06 and plan nos.HH:20:05:114:01C, 02A and site location plans date stamped 13.09.05, for the following reason:
1. It is considered that the proposed access would cause detriment to the residential amenities of the locality by reason of its juxtaposition with the adjacent residential properties and the general disturbance caused to them arising from the use of the proposed access by farm traffic.

Contact: Matthew Broome