

MEMORANDUM

From: Planning Control Manager

To: Head of Environment and Planning

Our Ref: EP/DC/PP/2018/0664

Your Ref: MR/P/2018/0664

Date: 26th October 2018

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

TOWN AND COUNTRY (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995

Location: O. S Grid Ref: 422 460 Bowling Bank Farm, Mulsford Lane, Worthenbury, Wrexham.

Development: Re-surface existing agricultural track (in retrospect).

I refer to your email / consultation dated 26/010//2018 and request for further comments in respect of the above.

The proposed development site is located on Mulsford Lane which is a narrow, rural, unclassified road subject to a 60mph speed limit. However, I would estimate typical vehicle speeds at being around 30mph along this section given the geometry of the road.

Assuming typical speeds of 30mph, any proposed / existing access would normally require visibility splays of 2.4 x 43m in both directions measured to the centreline of the adjoining highway. Visibility can be permitted to the centerline of the adjoining highway given the restricted carriageway width along this section.

Visibility from this widened access is inadequate in both directions providing splays of approximately 2.4 x 19m to the south east and 2.4 x 37m to the north west measured to the centerline of the adjoining highway. Visibility is impeded in both directions by the existing hedgerow.

I would not normally wish to support any proposed development that would result in any significant increase in vehicle movements using this sub-standard access.

Existing Access

Previous images along this lane (Google Maps – March 2009) appear to indicate a very narrow fence / possible gate setback between the mature hedgerow either side of the access. If this was a field access, then it would appear to have a low level of usage.

Proposed Access

This access appears to have been widened significantly to approximately 22m wide reducing to 6.5m at approximately 13.5m behind the adjoining carriageway. The access is gated at this point. The access has been surfaced with loose bound materials (ie/ hardcore) which has the potential to spill onto the adjoining highway. There also appears to be an additional gated access running alongside this access which I assume is associated with the existing woodland / tree growing business.

A significant amount of hardcore has been placed in the highway verge without consent from the Highway Authority ie/ s.184 consent.

If the application is supported, I would recommend that the access is surfaced with hard bound materials (ie/ bitmac) for a minimum distance of 10m behind the adjoining highway.

I recently asked our Streetscene Engineer (Kevin Edwards) to visit the site and provide comments. The comments made are as follows:-

"The entrance did not seem to be spilling out into the highway at the time of my visit but as the material is unbound and partly recycled hardcore running up to the highway edge.

I have two concerns:-

- 1. Frequent use of the entrance in addition to an informal; passing place will soon lead to the surface breaking up.*
- 2. There is a shallow 150mm diameter plastic twin wall pipe in the adjacent ditch headwall. This appears to be running in the direction of the new entrance and if so has insufficient cover for traffic.*

The only solution to avoid future maintenance problems would be to provide either a concrete or at least a heavy duty bitumen macadam surface for 5 metres from the edge of the carriageway. Any section of the pipe within the former highway verge should be provided with adequate protection".

Traffic Generation

It is unclear whether this access was an existing access and if it was, what it was used for and what level of daily vehicle movements occurred. I previously requested clarification in respect of the existing / proposed use of the access (including type of vehicles accessing the site) and provide details of existing / proposed daily vehicle movements.

The applicant's agent provided the following response:-

- The level of the upgraded track is the same as the previous ground levels*
- There were flooding issues at the site due to blocked ditches and culverts. This has been resolved by the de-silting of ditches, unblocking culverts and installation of two 100mm perforated pipes along the edge of the track. The drainage infrastructure at the site had not been maintained for a number of years prior to Mr Hopkins purchasing of the site and the maintenance works undertaken have improved drainage at the site.*
- The entrance is used infrequently to access the site for hedge cutting tractors and woodland maintenance machinery. The level of usage is not proposed to change as a result of this application. Vehicle movements are unlikely to exceed 1 or 2 vehicles a year until the woodland mature and tree removal is required as part of the ongoing management.*
- Mr Hopkins has confirmed that he intends to plant a new hedge along the line of the track and that this will reduce the effective width from that shown of the aerial photographs sent previously.*

If the proposed access is only used by 1 or 2 vehicles (up to 4 vehicle movements) per year by just a tractor & trailer, then an access 5m wide, gated 10m behind the adjoining highway and surfaced with hard bound materials for 10m would be adequate. The provision of full visibility splays would be considered preferable. However, if the proposed access does not experience any significant increase in vehicle movements compared with the existing access use, then we could not justify the provision of full visibility standards.

Supplementary Notes

The applicant's attention should be drawn to item nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the supplementary notes.

Peter O'Shea

LM Planning Control Manager