

**13. FULL APPLICATION – TO WIDEN AN EXISTING 2.75 METRE GATEWAY TO 4.58 METRES IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ACCESS FOR FARM MACHINERY – NEAR OLD HALL FARM, UNNAMED ROAD FROM ROAD LEADING TO TUNSTEAD TO GLEBE FARM, WORMHILL (NP/HPK/0719/0718, CW)**

**APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Summary**

1. The proposed development seeks to widen an existing access from 2.75 metres to 4.58 metres to improve access for farm machinery. Subject to conditions, the development would not cause any adverse effects to the valued characteristics of the National Park and accordingly, the application is recommended for approval.

**Site and surroundings**

2. The access is located on the western side of the unnamed road from Wormhill to Hargatewall directly opposite the access to Hill Top Farm.
3. The entrance gives access through a strip of Peak District National Park Authority owned woodland to reach a further entrance into the farmer's field which has double five bar timber gates.
4. The site is within the Wormhill Conservation Area.

**Proposal**

5. To increase the width of the existing access from 2.75 metres to 4.58 metres to improve the access for farm machinery/vehicles.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

1. **3 year implementation period.**
2. **Development to be carried out in accordance with specified plans.**
3. **Original stone gate posts to be retained and reused for the improved access.**
4. **No removal of trees**
5. **Surface within the highway to stay as existing**
6. **Advisory footnote re; Contact with Highway Authority regarding coordinating works adjacent to the highway.**

**Key Issues**

- The impact of the proposal on the cultural heritage and the wider landscape.
- The impact of the development upon the highway.

**History**

None

### **Consultations**

6. Highway Authority – No objections subject to the widened access, within highway limits, to be appropriately constructed in a material suitable for vehicular use and an advisory note to any consent for the applicant to contact DCC prior to any works adjacent to the public highway for the widened access.”
7. Parish Council – No response to date.
8. PDNPA Archaeology – No objections.
9. PDNPA Built Environment – No objections.
10. Considers the proposal would result in a slight erosion in the visual impact and strength of the tree belt and roadside wall but the impact would be negligible provided that the adjacent trees are not endangered and the surface within the highway land can continue to be informal, and that an extension of the tarmac is not required.

### **Representations**

11. No representations have been received.

### **Main policies**

12. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP3, L1, L3
13. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3, DMC8, DME1, DMT3

### **National planning policy framework**

14. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. When National Parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.
15. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In particular Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
16. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority’s Core Strategy 2011 and the Adopted Development Management Policies. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park’s statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.

### **Core Strategy**

17. Policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park’s objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired

outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GSP1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.

18. Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
19. Policy L1 identifies that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.
20. Policy L3 states that development must conserve and enhance any asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance or its setting that has statutory designation or registration or is of other international, national, regional or local significance.

#### Development Management Policies

21. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.
22. Development Management Policy DMC8 states that applications for development in a Conservation Area, or for development that affects its setting or important views into or out of the area, should assess and clearly demonstrate how the significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced.
23. DME1 relates to Agricultural or forestry operational development outlines a criteria based assessment required for buildings, structures and other development in relation to agriculture and forestry to be permitted. A number of these are in relation to structures and are therefore not relevant to this application, however, DME1 does state that the development should contribute to the Authority's objectives and avoid adverse effect on the area's valued characteristics.
24. DMT3 outlines access and design criteria with regards to highways. It outlines that an improved access to the highway will be permitted where a safe access is achievable for all and can be undertaken in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the area, and where possible enhances it.

#### Assessment

##### Principle

25. Policy DME1 allows for development to be undertaken for work associated with agriculture and forestry, subject to certain criteria. This application seeks to widen an existing opening making manoeuvring and access for farm machinery easier. It would

also relieve surface damage issues on the highway verge opposite the access caused by vehicles having to take a wide turning circle to get through the existing access.

26. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable and the main considerations relate to design details, and the impact upon the streetscape and Conservation Area.

#### Character/Landscape

27. The proposed widening is a minor amendment which, although a short section of dry stone walling will be removed, will not result in any adverse changes. The PDNPA Built Environment Team have acknowledged that whilst the proposal results in a small reduction in length of drystone wall, the Conservation Area Appraisal acknowledges the important contribution farming operations make to the areas character and should be supported. The proposal will also result in an improved highway verge opposite should the access widening go ahead.
28. The existing stone gateposts, one of which has already been dislodged by a tractor and trailer and is in need of repair, will be relocated to frame the wider access, thus ensuring that the wall and opening retains its original character and features.
29. The consultation response from the PDNPA Built Environment Team questioned whether any trees within the treebelt will be affected and if the surface within the highway will stay as it is currently. It has been confirmed that no trees will be affected and that the surface within the highway verge will not be altered.
30. The proposal is in accordance with policies L1 and L3 state that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and any asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance, and policies DMC3 and DMC8 state that development should conserve the surrounding landscape and preserve the Conservation Area.

#### Amenity Considerations

31. The proposed development, being a minor alteration to an existing access, would not result in any adverse impact on neighbouring properties. The alterations will however improve the amenity for the farmer requiring access and also improve the amenity of the locality through relieving the condition of the verge which would also benefit the property located opposite - Hill Top Farm.
32. The proposal is in line with policies GSP3 and DMC3 which indicate that development should not result in any adverse impact on amenity and the living conditions of communities.

#### Highway Considerations

33. The Highway Authority have responded stating that they do not have any objection to the proposal, subject to a suitable surface within the highway limits and ensuring that they are informed before works take place.
34. The improvements to the access will not result in any changes to the current surface. This was one of the concerns raised by the Built Environment Team who advise that the surface should remain informal. The track is currently constructed of a limestone based hardcore which is sufficient for the level of use and is appropriate within the Conservation Area.

35. The proposal is in accordance with Policy DMT3 which emphasises the importance of safe access onto the highway and states that development should not detract from the character and appearance of the locality, enhancing where possible.

### Conclusion

36. The proposal is necessary for farming in that it would enable safer and easier access into the field with farm machinery, without compromising highway safety. It would also bring about an improvement to the condition of the verge opposite this opening by eliminating damage from vehicles currently needing a wide arc to gain access.
37. It is considered that the widening of the access and the slight reduction in the length of drystone wall will have a negligible effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the streetscene.
38. It is therefore recommended that this application be approved subject to the conditions outlined above.

### Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

### List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil

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