

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

by

PETER NEWSON ASSOCIATES LIMITED

In support of the planning application

for

NEW PRIVATE VEHICULAR ACCESS

WARRENWOOD MANOR
HORNBEAM LANE, ESSENDON

on behalf of

COUTTS & CO

A CONTEXT

This statement is intended to act as an "executive summary" to be read in conjunction with the following detailed documents attached to this application:

- 1 Planning Statement prepared by Savills
- 2 Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Landscape Management Plan prepared by The Landscape Partnership
- 3 Tree Survey Report prepared by Patrick Stileman Limited

I Assessment

This application concerns an extensive 24.05Ha landholding in a very attractive rural Green Belt Hertfordshire setting, comprising four fields on undulating land formerly used for agricultural purposes.

Situated to the south of the B158 road between Potters Bar and Hertford, it lies close to the small village of Wildhill and the immediate area is characterised by several quite grand houses mostly long established in their own grounds, the closest including Camfield Place, Warren Wood, Woodhill House and, more recently, Wildewood, together with other detached individual dwellings, lodge houses or groups of cottages.

Accessed from the B158 at Cum Cum Hill via the bridleway Hornbeam Lane, the site south east of the lane was known locally as "Spike Island" and comprised a 1930s house, Meadow Cottage, its garage and a stable block.

The adjacent open field and land to the north west of Hornbeam Lane edged and crossed by Essendon Brook, was subsequently purchased by the previous owner and added to his landholding with the intention of providing stabling and barn facilities in connection with his interest in the sport of polo.

Between 1990 and 2000, permissions were obtained for a replacement dwelling and construction of a stable building and barn, followed by enforcement action due to irregularities during the course of construction (refer to planning statement) but latterly regularised by the current conditional permission SG/2009/2574/FP for construction of a replacement dwelling.

The consultation response to this application from County Rights of Way Department was an objection due to a number of problems for the public bridleway, Hornbeam Lane, including construction traffic, safety issues and surface damage resulting from increased intensity of use, including to the bridge, just north of the curtilage of No 3 Hornbeam Lane. With regards to the stability of the bridge, rights of access over the land and any stile that might be proposed, it was proposed to include a condition for details to be submitted showing the rights of access (easement), an informative regarding provision of any structure on the right(s) of way and also to provide details regarding the stability of the bridge prior to construction to County Rights of Way. Lawyers acting for Coutts & Co have been unable to provide sufficient evidence at present to satisfy the Local Authority and, for this reason, it has been necessary to investigate an alternative vehicular access to serve the property leading to this fresh application.

2 Involvement

In 1998 Peter Newson Associates Limited, Chartered Architects (PNAL), were commissioned by the previous landowner for the design of a replacement dwelling, new stables building for 20 polo ponies and a new storage barn which gained planning permission. Following abandonment of the project, PNAL have been engaged by Coutts & Co to seek fresh planning permissions to regularise development on the site.

Savills, acting for Coutts & Co, have liaised with the Local Planning Authority and prepared the accompanying Planning Statement.

The Landscape Partnership have updated their earlier landscape assessment and proposals which accompanies this application.

Patrick Stileman Limited have prepared the Tree Survey Report.

Tower Surveys Ltd have carried out the topographical survey which incorporates the earlier land survey completed by B A Surveys Ltd to accompany the application.

For Welwyn Hatfield Council, Principal Team Leader, Lisa Hughes and James Robson, Senior Planning Enforcement Officer have advised on the planning history, breaches of planning regulations, relevant adopted policies and their assessment of the current planning position.

3 Planning Policies

Relevant planning policies are addressed in the accompanying planning statement prepared by Savills.

4 Evaluation

The only road bordering the landholding of the site is the B158 and between this road and the location of the replacement house the land comprises two valley fields quite steeply sloping down to an area of low lying mixed woodland, Essendon Brook and ditches, which lies behind the gardens and cottages in Hornbeam Lane.

It is therefore necessary to provide a new driveway across this land to link the house and stables to the B158 to avoid driving along Hornbeam Lane.

5 Design

The site boundary with the B158 includes a hedgerow and a line of mature trees, notably pines.

A location for a new vehicular access has been identified for its ability to meet the design criteria for vision splays required by the Highways Development Design and with least impact to the root protection zone of the pines.

Between two of the pine trees it is proposed to construct a new crossover and entrance gateway set back from the highway to meet Highways standards.

Beyond the gateway a minimum width gravel surfaced access road with passing bays will follow the ground contours southwards to the valley base, pass through the woodland area. The Landscape Management plan proposes progressive removal of sycamore and non native black Italian poplar and the proposed line of the access road through the woodland area has been carefully positioned to minimise impact to the retained woodland. Construction of the drive through this area is designed to use a no-dig three dimensional cellular confinement system avoiding the requirement for excavation.

Exiting the woodland the drive rises towards the centre line of the consented replacement dwelling.

Between the pond and ahead of the house the driveway will also lead north-eastwards to serve the equestrian complex on the opposite side of Hornbeam Lane.

The driveway arrangement at the front of the house and serving the garage facility beyond was consented under SG/2009/2574/FP and does not form part of this application excepting where modified to avoid existing oak trees and to remove redundant length of driveway adjacent to the eastern boundary.

Layout

The proposed access location and driveway route is indicated on the drawings attached to this application and has been guided by the project Arboriculturist to minimise impact to existing trees.

C ACCESS

The site is remote from main facilities and transport centres which are at Potters Bar, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.

The University Bus service provides links between neighbouring villages: Essendon, Little Berkhamsted, Wildhill and Brookmans Park estate.

From the B158 Hornbeam Lane is an unmade bridleway, which can become overgrown, but forms part of a network of footpaths and bridleways linking local roads and settlements and well used by riders and walkers.

The provision of a new dedicated access driveway to serve the replacement dwelling and associated equestrian facility will remove potentially conflicting uses on Hornbeam lane which can continue beyond the existing properties in its established bridleway usage.

The new driveway will ensure no impediment to service/emergency vehicles reaching the replacement dwelling and equestrian establishment.