

**A10** **F/TH/20/1418**

**PROPOSAL:** Creation of new vehicular accesses onto George Hill Road (entrances 1, 2 and 4) and widening of existing vehicular access by 4m (entrance 3)

**LOCATION:**

Entrances 1,2,3 And 4 East Northdown Garden And Business Centre, East Northdown, George Hill Road. Margate Kent

**WARD:** Cliftonville East

**AGENT:** No agent

**APPLICANT:** Mr William Friend

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**GROUND:**

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Purchase Act 2004).

2 The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted application as amended by the revised plan numbered 27 Rev A, received 25 March 2021; and the amended plans numbered 20.029-16a, and 20.029-22a, received 18 December 2020

**GROUND;**

To secure the proper development of the area.

3 The development hereby permitted shall incorporate measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.

**GROUND**

In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF.

4 The development hereby approved shall incorporate a bound surface material for the first 5 metres of the access from the edge of the highway.

**GROUND**

In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF.

5 Prior to the construction of the accesses hereby approved visibility splays of 2 metres by 2 metres behind the footway on both sides of the 0.6m access with no obstructions over above footway level shall be provided and thereafter maintained.

## **GROUND**

In the interest of highway safety in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF.

6 Prior to the construction of the accesses hereby approved visibility splays of . shall be provided to the access on to George Hill Road as shown on the approved plan no 20.029-22a with no obstructions over one metre above carriageway level within the splays, which shall thereafter be maintained.

## **GROUND**

In the interest of highway safety in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF.

7 All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the first occupation; of any part of the development, or in accordance with a programme of works to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.

## **GROUND**

In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to adequately integrate the development into the environment in accordance with Policies QD02 and GI04 of the Thanet Local Plan

## SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The northern part of the site is located within the urban confines, within the conservation area. The southern part of the site is located within the green wedge and countryside. The northern part of the site has a hedge running along the boundary edge. The southern part of the site also has a hedge running along the boundary, although in places the hedge is setback from the road. The existing access is setback with low metal gates, and gravel surfacing.

## RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

F/TH/14/0759 - Creation of new accesses onto George Hill Road to facilitate tractor crossing  
- Granted - 27th January 2015.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for the creation of three new vehicular entrances off George Hill Road, and the widening of an existing vehicular access.

Entrance 1 is for a new 10m wide dropped kerb with access into the nursery area, providing a tractor crossing from the fields. Gates (6m x 1.8m) will be provided in a setback location to allow for the pull in of the tractor. Hedgerow will need to be removed in order to achieve adequate visibility splays, but new hedging is proposed to be planted outside of the splays. The hard surfaced area will be crushed stone or similar.

Entrance 2 is to be located almost opposite entrance 1 in order to create a direct access point between the nursery and the fields for a vehicular crossing. A new 10m wide dropped kerb is proposed with two pairs of 6m wide vehicular gates setback from the road by approximately 10m. A further 3m wide gate is proposed closer to the highway. All of the gates will be 1.2m in height. In between the gates planting is proposed, and grassed areas are proposed either side of the access from the road. The hard surfaced area will be crushed stone or similar.

Entrance 3 is an existing access that is being widened by 4m.

Entrance 4 is the creation of a new 10m wide access onto the fields, and is required for the loading of seed and fertilizer, and for cultivation and harvesting vehicles. The hard surfaced area will be crushed stone or similar.

### DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

#### **Thanet Local Plan Policies (2020)**

QD02 - Design

HE02 - Conservation Area

SP25 - Green wedge

### NOTIFICATIONS

A site notice has been posted and neighbouring occupiers notified. Three letters of objection and 18 letters of support have been received.

The main concerns are:

- Impact on green wedge,
- Highway safety,
- Impact on wildlife,
- Impact on nearby listed buildings and conservation area,
- Loss of hedgerow.

In support of the application the following comments have been made:

- Will improve provisions at the farm,
- Good opportunity for small units,
- This is a re-application of previously approved access points,
- Improve public safety and reduce the potential of a road traffic collision,
- Improvement of access points useful for larger vehicles accessing the site,
- It will reduce traffic that uses the old farm road and improve road safety,

- Proposal retains green infrastructure.

## CONSULTATIONS

**KCC Highways** - I refer to the above planning application and confirm I have no objection in respect of highway matters. I note that two of the proposed entrances have been amended from those previously approved, but the revised positions are acceptable, subject to safeguarding conditions.

## COMMENTS

The application has been called to planning committee by Cllr Towning to allow members to consider the acceptability of the access on the grounds that 'since the original consent for accesses was first granted the applicant has submitted further application for industrial uses and units which will change the use of the accesses'.

### **Transportation**

The proposal is to provide three new 10m wide vehicular accesses onto George Hill Road, and widen an existing access by a further 4m.

All of the accesses are setback, and provided with the necessary visibility splays.

KCC Highways has been consulted and advises that they have no objection in respect of highway matters. Whilst the proposed access are in a slightly revised location when compared to the previously approved scheme, the revised locations remain acceptable subject to safeguarding conditions that require bound surface materials, and visibility/pedestrian visibility splays, as shown on the approved plans.

The proposed development will therefore achieve a safe and suitable access to the site, in accordance with paragraph 108 of the NPPF.

The impact upon highway safety is therefore considered to be acceptable.

### **Character and Appearance**

The proposal is to create three new vehicular access points into the site, one of which is to the north, and the other two are to the south, along with the widening of the existing access.

There will be no visual impact caused through the widening of entrance 3, which is solely for the widening of the dropped kerb by 4m, with no change to the entrance appearance.

Proposed entrance 1 is to the north, within the urban area. A detailed plan design for the entrance has been submitted. It shows the removal of hedgerow and the provision of a new gate that is setback from the road by 8m. The gate is 6m wide and 1.8m high, and of a metal design. Timber fencing of 1.8m in height attaches to the gate in a splayed design. New planting is proposed in front of the fencing, and the hard surfacing of the area in front of the gate will be crushed stone or similar. A design similar to this has been previously approved.

Given its urban location, the height of the fence and gate are deemed acceptable, and given the presence of the planting to the front of the fence, this will soften the appearance of the new fencing. Grass is proposed either side of the access in front of the planting areas, which will soften the appearance further.

Proposed entrance 2 is indirectly opposite proposed entrance 1. It is intended to provide a 10m wide dropped kerb, with a pair of vehicular gates setback by 10.8m from the kerbside. The hard surfaced area will be crushed stone or similar. A further 3m wide gate is provided 2m setback from the road. Elevation plans have been submitted showing that the gates will be 1.2m high field gates, which are metal and quite open in appearance, similar to the existing gates at entrance 3.

Proposed entrance 4 is located opposite Botany Road. The proposed works within the red line on the plan are for the dropping of the kerb, with hard surfacing to match the crushed stone or similar material used on the other accesses. The site plan for the overall proposal indicates that gates may be erected further into the site, but these works are not included within the application site. If further gates/fences were to be erected in the future, then they may be considered as permitted development, particularly if not exceeding a height of one metre.

Whilst the proposed works will have some visual impact through the loss of hedgerow and the hard surfacing of areas that are currently soft landscaped, there will be minimal impact given the low level height of the proposed fences/gates, and the retention of, and proposed, soft landscaping that will soften the appearance. In terms of the hard surfacing, crushed stone or similar is proposed, which is characteristic of a rural setting, and in keeping with the agricultural use.

The proposed accesses are a minimum of 80m from East Northdown Cottage, the nearest listed building, but there is significant landscaping and boundary treatments between the proposed development and all listed buildings in the vicinity, and given the low level nature of the proposed development there is considered to be no impact upon the setting of designated heritage assets.

Whilst there will be some loss of hedgerow and soft landscaping, the impact on biodiversity is considered to be minimal given the scale of the proposal and the intent to provide new planting.

Whilst some of the works are located on the edge of the green wedge, they will not result in the loss of open space and will provide low level development that appears in keeping with the agricultural use of the site.

The accesses are provided in connection with the agricultural business and to improve connectivity between the agricultural fields and the nursery. The proposed development will relate to surrounding development and respect the character of the surrounding area, and given the materials to be used and the agricultural design of the fencing, the impact upon the conservation area and green wedge is considered to be acceptable, and in accordance with Policies QD02, HE02 and SP25 of the Thanet Local Plan.

## **Living Conditions**

There is a significant distance to the nearest neighbouring occupiers, and as such the provision of the new vehicular accesses will have limited impact in terms of noise and disturbance for neighbouring properties. The accesses provide direct access between the farm and the field, and therefore the accesses are only likely to be used during daytime hours when access to the farm is required.

The impact upon neighbouring amenity is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy QD02 of the Thanet Local Plan.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed development will provide a safe and suitable access, with only limited visual impact, and therefore it is recommended that Members approve the application subject to safeguarding conditions.

## **Case Officer**

Emma Fibbens