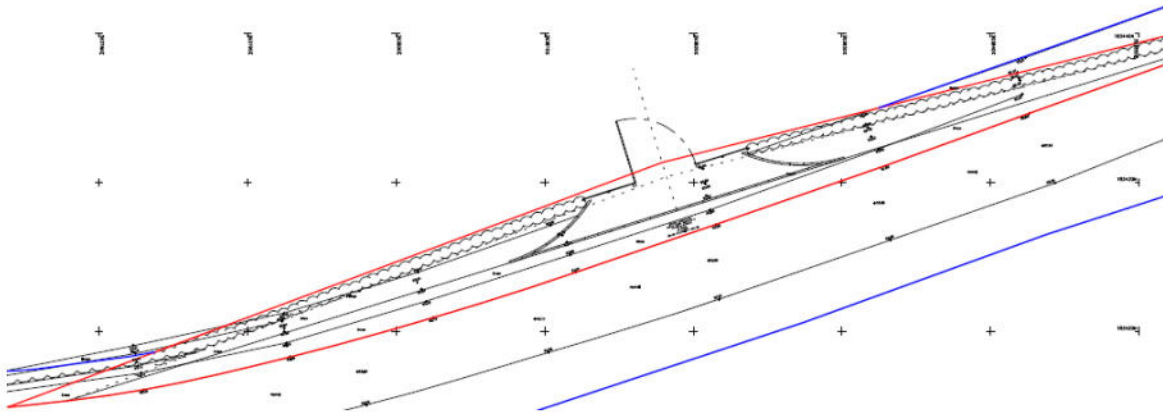
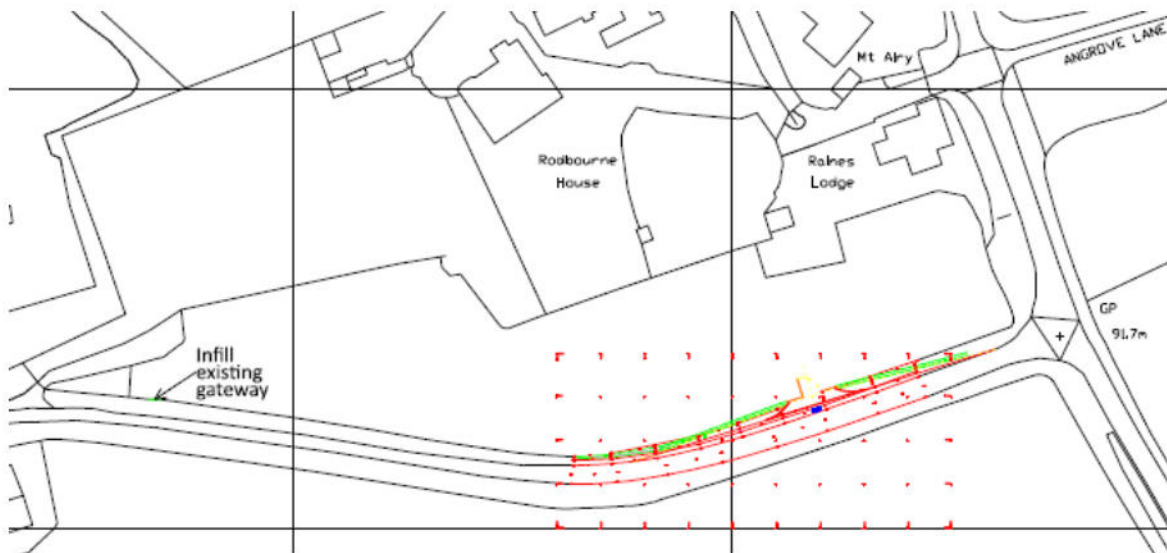


The existing field access is shown below and as can be seen is also positioned in close proximity to the neighbouring residential point of access, adding further to the overall inconvenience of the existing position.



The application proposes the replacement of the existing access with a new, more usable arrangement, positioned to the east as shown on the plan extract inserted below. The new access is slightly rebated into the field so as to provide enhanced visibility in either direction. New hedgerow planting will be provided to the rear of the visibility splay, and away from the piped ditch. In order to allow for the movement of farm vehicles towing a trailer the gate's access apron is broadened to provide a sweeping radii, thus avoiding potential inconvenience for other road users, although this is a lightly trafficked road.



Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that all applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Development Plan comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), and the 'saved' policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP) 2011 (adopted June 2006).

The following Core Strategy Policies are believed to be most applicable to the application assessment.

- CP48 – Supporting Rural Life
- CP50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP51 – Landscape
- CP57 – Ensuring high-quality design and place-shaping
- CP60 – Sustainable Transport
- CP61 – Transport and Development

Additionally, Core Policy 34 regarding employment related development states that development will be supported that supports sustainable farming and food

production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification. Therefore, having due regard to Policies 34, and 48 of the WCS the proposed new access is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Core Policy 48 makes clear that 'Protecting the countryside and maintaining its local distinctiveness' is one of the key objectives. At paragraph 6.69 the supporting text confirms that "Improving accessibility between places within the countryside may sometimes mean that development requiring planning permission is required, such as new roads, cycle routes, gates, signposts and bus shelters. Some telecommunications works may also fall into this category. In such cases, comparable to the application development herein proposed, Core Policy 48 introduces a presumption in favour of such works which can greatly benefit rural areas, where these are environmentally acceptable.

Achieving sufficient visibility is obviously key, the submitted plans clearly show the visibility splays to be achieved, and enhanced by comparison with the access being replaced, and reflecting the realistic road speeds and the fact that farm vehicles, such as tractors etc are likely to be higher, enabling a better driving position for visibility so on balance the proposed access is superior to the current arrangements.

On this basis it is not considered that the proposal would result in cumulatively severe impacts to the highway network contrary to the guidance contained at paras of the framework and CP62 of the WCS such that consent ought to be refused. Specifically, I would draw attention to paragraph 116 to the NPPF, as inserted below, along with the improved usability proposed, in association with the needs of the farm.

"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios."

A balanced view regarding how the visibility splays are to be met, especially given the fall-back position of the existing field access which has poor visibility forces the conclusion this is a materially better proposal.

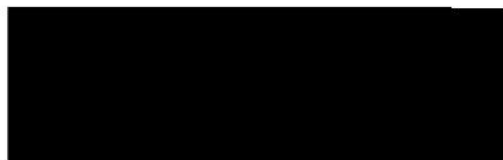
Core Policy 51 (Landscape) requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.

In this case, only a simple field access is proposed, having a neutral impact as it replaces an existing gateway break in the hedge. It will also employ a traditional timber pair of five-bar gate and fencing together with mixed species hedgerow replanting. The proposal is very small in scale. The gate itself is considered to be of a design and appearance that would not be out of keeping with its rural setting. It is considered to be in accordance with Core Policy 51. The application also proposes the removal of a section of hedge adjacent the highway and the planting of a hedge along the new access track. It is considered that the planting of replacement hedges

will mitigate the loss of the existing section of hedge in accordance with Core Policies 50 and 51. The application is exempt from the BNG regime in accordance with the reduced thresholds from 6th August.

I trust the above brief comments are proportionate and sufficiently clear to ensure your planning support, however if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me direct.

Yours faithfully



Simon Chambers
Director

Enc.