

TALE VALE  
(Broadhembury)

07/1950/FUL

Target Date: (05.09.2007)

Applicant: R G, A M, & E G Persey  
Location: Pitmans Farm, Dulford  
Proposal: Alternative vehicular access

### **CONSULTATIONS**

#### County Highway Authority

No objection was raised, subject to the imposition of conditions relating to surfacing and visibility splays.

#### East Devon District Council Estates

No objection was raised as the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the Council's retained houses at 'Sunnyside'.

### **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL**

"Approved unanimously."

### **WARD MEMBER(S)**

No comments have been received at the time of writing the report.

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

#### Support

One letter has been received raising the following points:

- The existing access is dangerous.
- The landscaping scheme would improve privacy and the appearance of the area.
- Increased parking provision would be made available.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

<b>App.No:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>
07/0868/FUL	Alternative vehicular access.	Withdrawn	04.06.07
06/1395/FUL	Alterations to field gateway to create new farm access.	Refused	30.06.06
		Dismissed on Appeal	22.01.07
05/2401/FUL	Agricultural building and mobile home, alteration to field gateway to create new farm access and pedestrian access to existing footpath.	Refused	24.10.05
04/P2481	Alterations to existing field entrance to create	Refused	12.11.04

new farm entrance and associated works.

86/P1958	Reconstruction of farm buildings to form dwelling with garage and new access.	Refused	27.01.87
86/P1213	Vehicular and pedestrian access to farmhouse.	Withdrawn	22.08.86

## **PLANNING POLICIES**

### Devon Country Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy CO6 – Quality of New Development

### East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy S5 – Countryside Protection

Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Policy TA7 – Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access

## **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

Pitmans Farm is surrounded by a collection of residential properties which are centrally located within the village of Dulford. Pitmans Farm comprises a main farmhouse, which adjoins a short terrace of three further dwellings, and a number of outbuildings which are located approximately 15 metres away to the south west. The agricultural land belonging to the farm lies predominantly to the south and partially fronts the A373 road from Honiton to Cullompton which passes through Dulford. The existing vehicular access for Pitmans Farm joins the A373 and is shared with one of the terraced houses (1 Rose Cottage) and an additional residence; Dale House. The village of Dulford does not have an identified built-up area boundary.

## **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposal follows the withdrawal of a previous scheme (REF: 07/0868/FUL) and involves the creation of a new vehicular access to adjoin the A373 approximately 30 metres to the south of the existing access. The road would measure 4 metres in width and provide vehicular access to Pitmans Farm and 1 Rose Cottage, the northernmost of the three terraced properties. The new track would continue around the rear of the outbuildings and adjoin an existing stone track. The remaining properties in the terrace, Hill View and 2 Rose Cottage, have been offered vehicular rights over the new access lane but would retain their existing parking preferences. The existing vehicular access from Pitmans Farm and 1 Rose Cottage onto the A373 would be blocked up, although Dale House would be unable to utilise the new road and would continue to access the A373 from the existing entrance. A landscaping scheme consisting of a Devon bank, trees and hedging has been detailed on the submitted plans in an attempt to reduce the potential visual impact caused as a result of the intrusion into agricultural land. The revised scheme also shows a reduction in the width of the new track to help minimise the impact on the open countryside.

## **CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

The main issues to discuss are the three recently determined applications and an associated planning appeal, the impact on highway safety, the justification for the access and the impact on the landscape.

## Background

A new vehicular access for Pitmans Farm has been the subject of six previous applications and the three most recently determined are discussed in turn.

(i) 04/P2481

This application proposed a pedestrian access on the site of the current application, and vehicular access onto the A373 adjoining the boundary of the curtilage belonging to 6 Oak Close, approximately 80 metres to the south east. The application was refused because the improvements in highway safety would be limited by the existing access remaining open. The visual impact was considered inappropriate given the limited improvement in highway safety.

(ii) 05/2401/FUL

This proposal incorporated a new vehicular access, a mobile home and an agricultural building. All three elements of the proposal were considered unacceptable, with the former being refused on the grounds that the improvements in highway safety would be limited by the existing access remaining open. The visual impact was considered inappropriate given the limited improvement in highway safety. The site for the vehicular access was proposed to continue across the field and adjoin a single lane road to the south of the existing access which leads to the A373.

(ii) 06/1395/FUL and subsequent Appeal

The sole element of this application was the provision of a new vehicular access on the same site as that proposed under the preceding application. The application was refused because the improvements in highway safety would be limited by the existing access remaining open. The visual impact was considered inappropriate given the limited improvement in highway safety.

The Appeal was dismissed by the Inspector who acknowledged that the existing access seemingly failed to meet modern standards. However, the Inspector highlighted that the proposal would: "...create a scar damaging to the rural scene and I would need to be convinced that either this harm is low key or would be outweighed by highway safety gains. I do not find the appellants case compelling on these matters." The issues that were considered in reaching this decision were the distance that residents using the new access would have to travel in comparison to the existing farm access. The new access was proposed to be a green track which the Inspector felt may be worn by residential and commercial traffic. This degradation, together with the distance across the field to the properties, would discourage use of the track. For the sake of convenience, the Inspector concluded, the existing access would still be used as there was no intention to block it off and Dale House traffic would have to use it in any event. The Inspector also noted that there was no evidence of increased viable agricultural activity and as such: "...this new track would bring little real useable benefit."

## Highway Issues

The existing access provides poor visibility, particularly to the north west. Whilst Dulford is subject to a 30mph speed limit, vehicles can be seen to travel appreciably faster, particularly from the south east where a gradient in the land slopes down to the village centre. The new access offers comparatively improved visibility in each direction, although the Highways Officer recommended a condition requesting more details in order to determine whether the visibility splays are acceptable.

## Justification

The submitted details show the existing access to Pitmans Farm and 1 Rose Cottage would be closed to vehicular traffic. However, access to Dale House via the existing entrance would have to remain as this property could not make use of the new road due to its configuration. The occupants of 2 Rose Cottage and Hill View have not indicated that they would make use of the new access which as a result would only provide vehicular access for two residential properties.

## Impact on Landscape

This new proposal involves relocating the access road to an area adjacent to existing development which would reduce the impact of the proposal on the open countryside. The application also includes the provision of a landscaping scheme which would screen the development from public vantage points. The scale of the proposal is such that a sizeable tract of the agricultural land would be lost, although the screening element would assuage the impact on the character and appearance of the landscape to some extent. Nonetheless, this loss of open countryside has not been justified in terms of a proven and sufficient need.

The proposed access drive would form a large area of tarmac and stone chippings that would have a significant urbanising impact to the detriment of the rural character and visual quality of the landscape on the edge of the village.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In comparison to the existing access, the new location is likely to lead to an improvement in visibility onto the A373. However, this improvement needs to be judged against the impact of the proposal on the open countryside. Whilst the aforementioned landscaping scheme would reduce this impact, the overall effect of the scheme is such that the improvements in the access for only two properties would not outweigh the detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. Although the revised application has involved a reduction in the scale of the access track, it is not considered that this has been sufficient to overcome the impact on the open countryside in view of the limited justification in highway safety improvement.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE for the following reason:-

1. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed access route would have a significant urbanising impact to the detriment of the character and appearance of the landscape in this countryside location and would only result in a limited improvement in highway safety by reason of the fact that the existing access will have to remain open to serve another dwelling. The impact of the proposed development on the open countryside has not been adequately justified in order to make an exception to established countryside protection policies. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CO6 (Quality of New Development) of the Devon Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 and Policy S5 (Countryside Protection) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011.

## List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.