CIVITAS
Planning Limited

Prior notification for a new agricultural access track at:

Lees Hall Barn, Lees Hall Farm, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 6JT

Supporting Planning Statement

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This prior notification application is made for the construction of an access and short agricultural track at Lees Hall Barn. The agricultural track will safely accommodate agricultural vehicles accessing the land; crucially the track will facilitate access to the agricultural land for agricultural machinery, the introduction and rearing of sheep, contract farming activities and any necessary deliveries such as silage/haylage/fertiliser.

2.0 Background

2.1 The applicant has recently purchased the property and the associated land holding extends to 35 acres. The applicant intends to farm the land, actively through the introduction of a flock of sheep to the land, but has also considered letting some land to contract farmers.

2.2 This application is made as it is necessary to develop an access and agricultural track in order to facilitate the use of this land. The access and track will allow large agricultural vehicles to access to agricultural land to the north of the proposed access. The land over which the track will be developed is very poor grade land, a former refuse tip, and of little agricultural value. However it is necessary to gain access over this land to facilitate the use of the agricultural land to the north.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The proposal is to create an access from the private drive and develop a track over the area of poor grade land to connect with the area of existing hardstanding to north. The track will be a width of 4m and approximately 100m in length and designed with turning radii to facilitate safe access for the large agricultural vehicles to the site. At the end of the proposed track is the area of existing hardstanding (hatched on the attached plan). The track will terminate at this point and the hardstanding allows for the large vehicles to turn and leave in forward gear. The track will allow vehicles making deliveries to deposit at the hardstanding and/or agricultural contract vehicles direct access to the fields beyond.

3.2 The track will facilitate safe access for these large vehicles in poor and adverse weather conditions and the route represents an efficient means of access to the agricultural land.

3.3 The construction of the track will only take place on land that forms part of the agricultural holding.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1 While this application is for Agricultural Prior Notification, The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) at para.28 states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas, through promoting development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. The track will facilitate access to the agricultural land which is essential for the economic development of the farm.

4.3 The proposal also accords with Green Belt policy given it will facilitate the continued development of an agricultural land use. Policy 10, OC2 of the High Peak Local Plan (2005) states that:

> *In the area of green belt defined on the proposals map approval will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings for purposes other than:*
>
> *Agriculture and forestry*

This prior notification application is for the access to the agricultural land for agricultural purposes. Once the track is in place the applicant intends to introduce a flock of sheep, chickens are currently reared on site. The access will allows access for agricultural vehicles and machinery and for deliveries such as animal feed; the access will also be used by agricultural contractors accessing the site.

4.4 The proposed construction of an agricultural track and building is permitted development under Schedule 2 Part 6 Agricultural Buildings and Operations of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 As Amended:

> *Class A Development on units of 5 hectares or more*
> *Permitted development*
>
> *A. The carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of—*
>
> *(a)works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or*
> *(b)any excavation or engineering operations, which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit.*

4.5 It has been demonstrated above that this agricultural track is reasonably necessary for the purposes of introducing sheep to their land, delivery of haylage/silage/fertiliser and for access by agricultural contractors. The track is therefore absolutely necessary to secure safe access, especially in adverse weather conditions.

4.6 Part 6 Class A continues:

Development not permitted

A.1 Development is not permitted by Class A if—

(a)the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;
(b)it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;
(c)it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;
(d)the ground area which would be covered by—
(i)any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations; or
(ii)any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 465 square metres, calculated as described in paragraph D.2 below;
(e)the height of any part of any building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;
(f)the height of any part of any building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;
(g)any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road;
(h)it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or an excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building; or
(i)it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 1(6) land which are connected with fish farming.

4.7 None of the above refer to the proposed agricultural track:

a) the development is not being carried out on a separate parcel of land
b) no changes are proposed to a dwelling
c) the track is purposed designed to facilitate access to the agricultural unit
d) no building, no structure for accommodating livestock and no plant or machinery arising from engineering operations are proposed that would exceed 465 square meters.
e) the location is not within 3km of an aerodrome
f) no structures are proposed that would exceed 12 metres

g)the development is not within 25 metres of a trunk road or classified road
h) the proposal is not connected with accommodation of livestock
i) the proposal is not connected with fish farming.

4.8 Attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the Environment Agency's guide to Best Farming Practices: Farm Tracks. The document states the importance of the effective positioning, construction and maintenance of access tracks to the efficient movement of machinery and how vital it is for all farmers.

4.9 This document supports the proposal stating that by improving access for vehicles and machinery by providing good tracks, stable track surfaces and access points will allow timely access to fields, will control access, and safeguard habitats and protect soil from damage.

4.10 The proposed agricultural track is therefore permitted development under Schedule 2 Part 6 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 As Amended and is supported by national policy and the Environment Agency as necessary for successful farm operations, safeguarding of the environment and enhanced value of the holding.

5.0 Design and Access Statement

5.1 The design of the proposed construction of the agricultural track is in direct response to the needs of the agricultural operations at Lees Hall Barn.

5.2 The track will be constructed with hardcore topped off with road planings. This will create a stable surface for the large vehicles.

5.3 The agricultural track has also been designed with turning radii to allow agricultural vehicles to turn safely.

5.4 Where necessary the land over which the track will run will be re-graded to ensure safe access and that variations in land level are not too severe.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 This application is for the development of an agricultural track to support this agricultural business in a rural area, to ensure working conditions are safe and to safeguard the environment. This proposal constitutes permitted development under Schedule 2 Part 6 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 As Amended.

Appendix 1

Farm tracks and gateways

What's in it for you?

Protect land and conserve soil

Good tracks and well-maintained gateways help farmers to get around their farms easily and to make the most of what every field has to offer. But it's important to guard against tracks and gateways becoming channels for runoff in wet weather.

When adding new tracks, careful route planning and positioning, sound construction and regular maintenance are all important. They will help you prevent erosion of track surfaces, minimise runoff problems and avoid damage to machinery and injury to livestock.



Want to know more?

Further reading

Access Track Construction in Small Woodlands
(Forest Research; Technical Note 27/98)

Useful websites

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
www.defra.gov.uk /farm/environment/water/csf
www.wales.gov.uk
www.environmentsensitivefarming.co.uk
www.naturalengland.org.uk
www.ccw.gov.uk

Telephone

Environment Agency **08708 506 506**
Natural England **0845 600 3078**
Countryside Council for Wales **08451 306229**
LEAF **0247 6413 911**

Careful management of tracks and gateways can protect cattle and machinery and help you make the best use of your land.

Benefits	Actions
Access to all areas of the farm throughout the year	Create well-drained tracks with appropriate surfaces
Versatility of field use	Position tracks to suit potential uses
Less lameness and fewer punctures and machinery repairs	Improve track surfaces and repair any damage promptly
Reduced runoff and lower pollution risk	Provide good drainage
Avoidance of muddy gateways	Avoid routes with steep slopes that lead to unvegetated land, roads or watercourses
	Site gates at the top of sloping fields where possible

Case Study 10

New farm tracks cut clean-up costs after heavy rain



Roger Combe farms on the Bayfield Estate in North Norfolk – 770 hectares of gravelly soils that are prone to runoff.

The land is mainly in arable production, with cattle and outdoor pigs. Roger is keen to avoid polluting the River Glaven, which flows through the estate.

In recent years heavy rainfall has caused excessive runoff onto nearby public roads. The estate decided to tackle this problem, and the threat of river pollution, by applying for grant aid from the England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative (ECSFDI). This has enabled Roger to repair and upgrade 400m of tracks used by farm traffic and for access to woodland for timber felling.

The tracks have been improved with crushed concrete, tarmac and road planings. Each track was graded and rolled with a camber so that water drains easily into the surrounding fields.

'These farm tracks have prevented water and soil finding its way onto the public highway, so I have not been prosecuted or warned by the authorities for malpractice,' says Roger.

Roger has also taken action to reduce runoff from the outdoor pig fields. He has moved the herd to fields with less of a steep gradient. The new fields are surrounded by bunds to prevent runoff, with grass strips to filter sediment and improve access.

Counting the cost and reaping the benefits

Roger Combe estimates that the new tracks on the Bayfield Estate are saving him around £200 in clean-up costs each time there is heavy rain.

The tracks also save wear and tear on machinery, especially tyres, and cut travel time when spraying.

We made big mistakes in the past with soil erosion and we've learned a great deal. Our new farm tracks have helped us adapt our system to suit the environment and improve our profitability.

Roger Combe
Bayfield Estate, Norfolk



A gateway at the bottom of an exposed, sloping field is an open invitation for runoff onto nearby tracks and roads in wet weather.

Vehicle tracks

Where a single mud track becomes established in a field but is not well maintained or reinforced, it may develop a rutted surface. This can channel rainwater in wet conditions and cause runoff problems.

On the other hand, drivers who can't see a clear single track will be forced to do their own thing. This may create several different routes through fields, leading to widespread soil compaction.

Unstable, slippery soil surfaces make it difficult to control tractors, especially when hauling heavy loads at speed. Traction is severely reduced and braking becomes less effective. You may need an extra tractor and trailer for corn or grass hauling where rough farm tracks slow down operations.

Among the many types of farm tracks are grass strips that separate groups of outdoor pigs, or divide up crops within a field managed on a rotational basis. You can use these tracks as buffer zones to prevent runoff and as wildlife corridors. They should be laid across slopes whenever possible.

Helpful hints

Ensure tracks are well drained, and keep them firm and dry. Create new tracks away from wet areas, and relocate old tracks with persistent runoff problems.

Divert runoff from tracks into vegetated field margins or swales where it can be intercepted and filtered, rather than into unvegetated land, roads or watercourses.

On slopes, make tracks along contours to prevent runoff.

A dual-purpose track for vehicles and livestock may be cheaper in the long term.

Use lightweight vehicles such as quad bikes on grass tracks.

You may be able to get grant funding for new tracks under the ECSFDI.

Cow tracks

Bigger herds mean that cows have to travel farther to pasture. Uncomfortable or slippery surfaces can slow your animals down and limit feeding time, which reduces productivity.

Good cow tracks keep animals cleaner, cut milking time and reduce teat and udder damage. They can also help to limit mastitis and foot problems.

Cows prefer to walk on tracks that are soft on the surface but also firm and even. Try using bark over graded stone for a sound surface and good drainage. You can omit the bark, but avoid sharp objects such as flint or large uneven stones in the surface covering.

Paddock systems connected by cow tracks can provide a number of gateways to grazing. This helps alternate access points to avoid poaching in overused gateways.

You can use recycled materials, such as tyre rubber, to surface tracks. But don't allow this material to wash onto roads or into ditches and streams. Make sure you have the appropriate permission to reuse waste materials: contact us for advice.

Helpful hints

- Plan grazing areas carefully and establish suitable access tracks. Avoid wet areas and watercourses.
- Construct well-drained tracks, with a surface that is soft to walk on but also firm and even.
- Divert runoff from cow and vehicle tracks into a bunded swale or runoff buffer in a field margin, where it can be intercepted and filtered (see illustration on page 51). Do not allow dirty water from cow tracks to pollute surface water.
- Follow contours, avoiding steep slopes that encourage rills to form.
- Inspect and maintain tracks regularly.
- Do not drive tractors on specialised cow tracks.
- Cow tracks may be eligible for grant aid under the England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative.

Crossing watercourses

Livestock and farm vehicles frequently cross watercourses to enter fields, reach feeding areas or return to the farmyard for milking.

Stock and machinery can erode banks and damage riverbeds if they have unrestricted access to watercourses. Uneven or unstable riverbeds can injure animals and damage vehicles.

Watercourses can transmit infections between farms, and animals cause water pollution through muck and urine. Ditches and boggy areas near crossing points can increase the chances of fluke infestation.

If you provide simple bridges across ditches and streams, you can keep your animals clean, prevent injuries and reduce vet costs.

Helpful hints

- Don't allow stock unrestricted access to streams.
- Construct simple bridges over larger streams.
- Restrict access if a bridge is not feasible: consider using piping and/or filling in some ditches in consultation with the Environment Agency. Constructed stream crossings, culverts and in-stream works may need land drainage consent from us.
- Fence off wet areas to prevent livestock access.



Field tracks can provide a channel for runoff, soil sediment and pollutants to enter watercourses

Gateways

The bigger the field, the more likely it is that gates will be heavily used. Consider creating additional gateways, and moving existing ones, if heavy traffic is increasing the risk of soil damage and runoff.

Make sure that gateways have good drainage and are kept as dry as possible. To improve your gateways, add stone and compact the soil to provide firmer footing.

You may be able to use a sandwich of crushed limestone, permeable membrane and woodchips to create a well-drained gateway with a firm surface. Use stones carefully, to avoid foot damage to livestock.

You may need planning permission for gates that open onto public roads.

Helpful hints

Divert water away from your gateways.

Avoid feeding stock or siting water troughs near gates where these are prone to causing runoff.

Keep gateways level, firm, stable and dry. Position them at the top of your fields if you can, and certainly away from the lowest point in each field, to reduce soil loss.

If a gateway is frequently used by stock, consider covering the area with sand, bark or another soft surface.

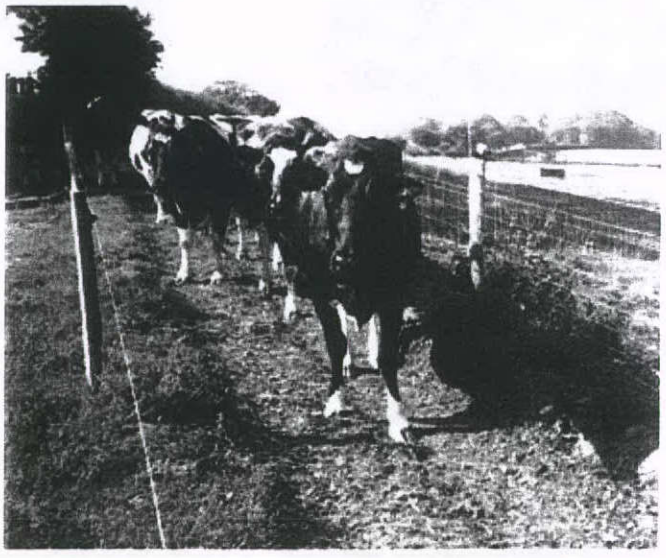
Create extra gateways for frequently used fields.

Consider a paddock system served by cow tracks, with a choice of gateways to pasture.

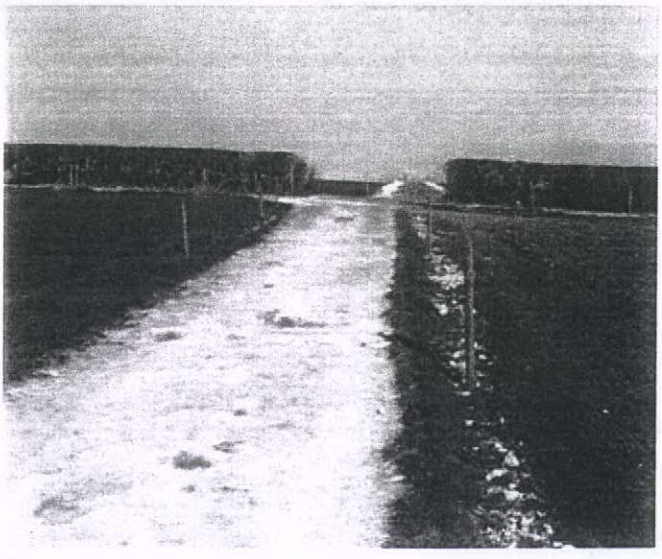
Move gateways that suffer permanent damage.



Do you need to consider improving your farm tracks or moving well-worn gateways?



Good cow tracks reduce lameness and save time.



This track helped reduce soil erosion in a field of permanent grassland where treading by cows was causing the soil to slump and slip down the slope.