

Howardian Hills



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Chief Planning Officer
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Ryedale House
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Contact: Paul Jackson

My Reference: 3.1

Your Reference: 08/00291/FUL

Date: 28th May 2008

Dear Sir

Alteration to existing vehicular access and formation of access drive; Stonegrave

I am responding on behalf of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee to your consultation regarding the above proposal.

This application involves the creation of a new access track to a farm.

I visited the site on 7th May 2008 and have the following comments to make:

- The grassland does not appear to have any existing botanical interest and therefore there would not be any damage to existing important wildlife habitat. The road construction should not however be so close to the existing mature trees on the western boundary as to cause any disturbance or damage to their root systems.
- Contrary to the Design and Access Statement, I consider that the proposed new access would be visible from Cawton on the opposite side of the valley. Therefore, whilst the re-use of the on-site concrete rubble as a road material is supported, this should be as a sub-base ONLY and the top surfacing should be a dark colour – new tarmac or recycled road planings (crushed tarmac) would be possible suitable alternatives.
- I do not feel that planting a row of trees along the northern part of the proposed new access track, where it cuts across the field, would be appropriate in the landscape. It is probable that the new track would be fenced and a more appropriate landscaping scheme would involve either a copse in the small area of field cut off by the new track, or a row of trees along the eastern boundary of the field (i.e. along the existing access track). On the subject of new fencing associated with the new drive, I would prefer agricultural pignet fencing rather than timber post-and-rail, which can be very visually intrusive.

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- Whilst not strictly within our remit I do feel that it is worth pointing out that the sad death of the previous owner of the property had nothing to do with the access issues onto the main road. He was walking along the road 100yards away, in the dark, when he was struck by a passing car. To infer in the Design and Access Statement that this proposed new access track might somehow have prevented that accident is disingenuous and distasteful. There is no denying that the exit onto the public road is dangerous, but that is coincidental to the incident involving the previous owner. It is also worth mentioning that the farm was originally an intensive pig farm, with large lorries regularly entering and leaving the premises, and presumably the existing track was able to cope with this size and volume of traffic.

Yours sincerely

PAUL JACKSON
AONB Manager
Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee