



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2025

by **C Rose BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/25/3369177

Arable Land at Furzehill, Dorset, BH21 4HU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr J George against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/FUL/2025/00596.
 - The development proposed is install a new agricultural access to arable fields at Furzehill.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal address in the banner heading above has been taken from the application and appeal forms as these accurately describe the location of the site and as neither party has provided written confirmation that a revised address has been agreed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the loss of boundary planting.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a small area of land on the eastern edge of a field adjacent to a road. The area in question comprises the land needed to form the new access and partly comprises part of a linear portion of scrub, hedgerows and tree planting at the field boundary adjoining the road. There does not appear to be any dispute between the main parties that the planting is protected under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
5. The immediate vicinity is comprised of open fields which are typically bounded by mature hedgerows and trees, with interspersed dwellings fronting roads. Except for the small access serving the nearby Peppercorn Cottage, the scrub and tree planting along this side of the road is largely intact from the gated access next to Bothenwood House to the south-west of the site to the junction with Petersham Lane and Holt Lane to the north-east. This planting creates a rural setting and quality to this part of the road making a positive contribution to the verdant rural character of the area.
6. The proposed access would require the complete removal of a sizable section of scrub/hedgerow and tree planting together with further trimming to both sides to allow for the associated visibility splays. This would be detrimental to the character

and appearance of the area and would remove a significant part of the planting that contributes to the rural charm of the locality and would result in harm to the landscape and rural character of the area.

7. I have had regard to the possibility of securing the provision of replanting behind the visibility splay by condition to mitigate any visual or ecological impact and acknowledge that the appellant refers to improving the holding over time. However, I have limited information in relation to the improvements with the planting behind the splays limited in extent such that this would not adequately compensate for the loss of the approximately 12m length, and associated depth, of planting.
8. It follows from the above that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the loss of boundary planting. As such, it is contrary to Policies HE2 and HE3 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (April 2014). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that development is of a high quality, is comparable with or improves its surroundings, and protect and seek to enhance the landscape character of the area taking into account natural features such as trees, hedgerows and woodland.

Other Considerations

9. The appellant has drawn attention to benefits from the proposed access by way of providing improved and safe access to the agricultural field and wider holding. Furthermore, it is stated that the proposal would negate the use of an existing access to the holding that the appellant states is via a field gate on a blind bend, and is substandard, uneconomic and unsafe due to its position, limited visibility and speed of traffic using the road.
10. However, the appellant's evidence is not supported by plans identifying the location of the existing access and the extent of the holding. As a result, it is unclear from the documents before me which access is relied upon at present and being proposed to be replaced.
11. The covering letter accompanying the planning application states that the access is unsafe for residents of Grange Cottage, but I have no details in relation to its exact location and usage other than reference by interested parties to an existing access in use via the Grange and the appellant mentioning its location on a blind bend. I also note reference in the appellant's Statement of Case to the agricultural field being currently served by a single formal access point on a national speed limit road, but again no location plan is provided to identify the exact position of the access.
12. Furthermore, from the written information before me, particularly from interested parties, reference is made to an existing access off Petersham Lane close to the access to Orchard House. The appellant states that the Petersham Lane access is unauthorised and made by a previous occupier. With regard to this access, it benefits from reasonable visibility and as detailed by interested parties has potentially been in use for decades with the road less highly trafficked than the road where the new access is proposed. In relation to the Petersham Lane access, I have no evidence before me in relation to any history of accidents or its level of use. Moreover, at the time of my site visit, I was able to view the access and while I noted the wet ground conditions, to my mind the agricultural access did not appear to be particularly unusual, unusable or unsafe due to its position, width, surfacing and available visibility.

13. As a result of the above and the presence of the access mentioned above off Petersham Lane, the level of use of the existing access referred to is unclear.
14. As such, the evidence from the appellant advising that the existing access point is dangerous is not supported by substantive evidence to enable me to come to a similar conclusion. Moreover, I am unable to fully assess any potential benefits of the proposed access against the existing access. This is the case even acknowledging that the Council raise no concerns regarding the safety of the proposed new access.
15. In light of the above, in the absence of further evidence clearly demonstrating the safety benefits of ceasing the use of the existing access and given the lack of substantive evidence clearly demonstrating that the access off Petersham Lane is dangerous or unusable, I give the highway benefits limited weight.

Conclusion

16. In favour of the proposal, I have given the benefits under other considerations limited weight. Against the proposal, I have identified that it would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the development plan. I give this harm moderate weight due to the width and depth of planting to be lost.
17. As a result, I conclude that the material considerations in the form of benefits to the farm and potential benefits to highway safety do not outweigh the harm from the creation of the new access to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
18. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rose

INSPECTOR