

Lamb Hill, Cornborough, Sheriff Hutton, YO60 6RX

NEW SITE ACCESS AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

July 2021

Revision A

**BRAMHALL
BLENKHARN
LEONARD**

This document has been prepared by Bramhall Blenkharn Leonard architects and accompanies a planning application for a new dwelling at Lamb Hill, Cornborough, to the west of Sheriff Hutton in North Yorkshire (20/01120/MFUL). The purpose of the document is to provide an overview of the process and rationale in forming the vehicular access from Cornborough Road into the site, at the centre of the site's southern boundary, along with woodland management that has been carried out using this access point.

The current planning application for a new dwelling on the site (the application which this document accompanies) utilises the same vehicular access point from Cornborough Road that was previously approved for purposes of woodland management. The access point in question was formed in December 2020, following approval of planning application 20/00660/FUL dated 2 October 2020.



Fig. 1.1 Photographs of new gated vehicular access point into the southern boundary of the application site from Cornborough Road.

2.0 Rationale for creation of new access under a separate planning application

Our clients, Arthur and Liz Woodhouse, approached the practice with the brief of building a new home for themselves on their site at Lamb Hill, Cornborough in November 2018. It was established at this early stage that any potential consent for a dwelling on the site would be made under Paragraph 79(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The requirements of Paragraph 79(e) establish a high standard, which can only reasonably be achieved with considerable time and design refinement and input from various consultants. Applications made under Paragraph 79(e) also need to be considered by independent design review panels to assess their design quality. As such, applications made under this policy are understandably not a fast process, and there is of course no certainty that such an application will be successful.

Arthur and Liz were very mindful of the fact that the existing shelterbelt woodland around the southern and eastern boundaries of the site was in need of thinning, scrub clearance and maintenance, having been planted by them approximately 20 years ago. Access to the woodland for maintenance purposes was not straightforward, due to there being no direct road access into the southern part of the site. The only pre-existing access options to the site, which is primarily an arable field, were at its north-eastern corner and mid-way along its western boundary, which adjoins a further arable field.

The existing access to the north-east corner of the site (Fig. 2.3) is provided via the access driveway to Cornborough Hall (Fig. 2.2), which sits to the north of the site, and the access to the site's western boundary is via a field gate off Cornborough Road (Fig. 2.1), which gives access to the adjoining field (Fig. 2.4). Any vehicle using this access point would then need to drive around the south east corner of the adjoining field.

This causes considerable difficulty in accessing the existing woodland, due to the adjoining fields usually being occupied by standing arable crops, especially at times of year when the ground is dry enough for vehicular access. Trying to gain access to the woodland with a vehicle for maintenance purposes would therefore involve some destruction of an arable crop, which would be unsatisfactory to the agricultural tenant of the field. This is particularly the case for the central southern area of the woodland, which is most distant from either of the two existing access points to the east and west.

With the above factors being considered, it was recognised as being potentially very beneficial to have a dedicated access to the woodland, and field beyond, at the central southern boundary of the site. Visibility analysis demonstrated that there was really only one sensible location for the access point along the southern boundary, which was the optimum point to achieve maximum visibility in both eastern and western directions along Cornborough Road. Both existing access points, to the east and to the west, have very poor visibility due to being close to bends in the road. This has always been a safety concern when accessing or leaving the site with large and slow vehicles, with visibility of approaching traffic being severely limited. The new access point was also designed with the gates being considerably set back from the highway edge in order that large vehicles can pull in well clear of the carriageway when the gates are closed, further improving the safety of the new access point.



Fig. 2.1 Image from Google Street View showing existing field access to south west of application site from Cornborough Road. Access point into application site is towards centre-left of image at left-hand end of existing shelterbelt tree planting, indicated by arrow (Image date: July 2019).



Fig. 2.2 Image from Google Street View showing existing access to south east of application site from Cornborough Road, via the access driveway to Cornborough Hall. Access point into application site is approximately 372m along driveway, measured from Cornborough Road junction (Image date: July 2019).

It was also considered that, should the application for the new dwelling on the site be successful, then the same access point could be utilised for the dwelling, having the best available visibility of any point along the southern boundary. If the application for the dwelling was unsuccessful, then Arthur and Liz would still have the benefit of a dedicated access point into the southern area of woodland for ongoing maintenance purposes, with significantly improved safety than either of the pre-existing access options. It was also likely that a standalone application for the new access would be a significantly quicker process than the full Paragraph 79(e) application for the new dwelling. This would have the advantage of providing the new access for management of the woodland at an earlier stage, allowing woodland maintenance to be conducted from this new access point at the earliest possible time.

As a result, it was decided to submit an application for the new access point, separate to the application for the new dwelling.



Fig. 2.3 Photograph across existing application site, looking north-east. Access point at north-east corner of site indicated by arrow.



Fig. 2.4 Photograph across adjoining field to west of application site, looking south-west. Field gate from Cornborough Road indicated by arrow.

3.0 Planning Sequence

Having decided to submit a separate planning application to deal with the new access point, this was submitted to Ryedale District Council on 16 July 2020 and given planning reference 20/00660/FUL. The application was recommended for approval by the case officer and approved at planning committee, with the decision notice for approval being issued on 2 October 2020. The new vehicular access point was then immediately constructed and completed on site in December 2020, in order that some woodland management works could be carried out prior to the bird nesting season in 2021 (March to August). This demonstrates how keen Arthur and Liz were to be able to start using the new, safer access point as soon as possible for the management of the woodland.

The planning application for the new dwelling (currently under consideration) was submitted to Ryedale District Council on 17 November 2020 and given planning reference 20/01120/MFUL.

Taking this approach has allowed Arthur and Liz and their appointed subcontractors to safely use the new access point for ongoing management of the woodland since December 2020, whilst the application for the new dwelling has been under consideration.

4.0 Ongoing Woodland Management

Since completing the new access point in December 2020, Arthur and Liz and their appointed subcontractors have been using it to undertake management of the existing woodland in the first part of 2021, prior to the bird nesting season (March to August). A considerable amount of self-seeded blackthorn scrub has been cleared from the woodland floor to encourage a greater diversity of woodland flora. Over time, the trees will be thinned, following consultation with a qualified arboriculturist, to ensure the long-term success and viability of the existing tree planting.

Clearance works that have already been undertaken since the new access was completed in December 2020 are demonstrated by the below photographs, which show areas of the existing woodland that have not yet been cleared (Fig. 4.1); areas that have been cleared since the new access was completed (Fig. 4.2 and 4.3); and photographs of cleared material awaiting removal (Fig. 4.4). To date, approximately 25% of the overall shelterbelt woodland area has been cleared, with maintenance and clearance works to the woodland scheduled to continue after August 2021, after the end of the bird nesting season.



Fig. 4.1 Photographs of areas of existing shelterbelt woodland awaiting clearance.



Fig. 4.2 Photographs of areas of existing shelterbelt woodland already cleared since new access was completed in December 2020.



Fig. 4.3 Photographs of areas of existing shelterbelt woodland already cleared since new access was completed in December 2020.



Fig. 4.4 Photographs of piles of cleared plant material awaiting removal.