

Rushcliffe Borough Council
Planning Department
Rushcliffe Arena
Rugby Road
West Bridgford
NG2 7YG

17th October 2023

Dear Sir / Madam,

Proposal: **Householder Planning Application to re-locate and re-instate entrance point and vehicular access to existing dwelling.**

Site: **'Easthorpe Gardens', Flawforth Lane, Ruddington, NG11 6LG.**

Introduction

On behalf of the freehold owners of, 'Easthorpe Gardens', we are pleased to submit a simple householder planning application for a minor proposal relating to the re-instatement of the main vehicular point of access to the property. The access point leads off an existing long established un-made access road / track off Flawforth Lane, sign posted to Easthorpe Farm.

Please note that this application does NOT propose any change or amendment to the existing point of access off Flawforth Lane.

Please note that there will be no intensification of use. This application simply relates to amending the point of entrance which is supported by the only affected and relevant neighbour, Mr Machin, of Easthorpe Farm.

Background

The current access point into the residential curtilage of Easthorpe Gardens is on land within the ownership of Mr Machin, of Easthorpe Farm.

Following consultation between the neighbours, it has been agreed that to re-instate the original access to Easthorpe Gardens would be beneficial to all. Mr Machin confirms in his supporting letter to this application that the owner of Easthorpe Gardens, and any visitors which can now include Amazon deliveries, Sainsbury/Tesco/Morrisons deliveries, etc all must enter his farm yard to access Easthorpe Gardens.

In addition to the planning application drawings and this accompanying cover letter / supporting statement, the application is supported with professional landscape and heritage input from *Influence* and *Bidwells*.

The site is in the Green Belt, and the access seeks to utilise a previous access location to the site (just to the south), which in turn enhances the ability to appreciate the historic layouts, forms of movement, etc linked to the area. Particularly so, when considered in conjunction with the historic grounds associated with Easthorpe House.

Within an earlier application, the conservation officer has previously noted that:

'the former gardens and parkland of Easthorpe House have been eroded by separation of ownership, subdivision and enclosure of land, 20th century agricultural developments, etc, such that on the ground the extent of garden and parkland is not immediately apparent, yet it remains. Mature trees are found to the north and east of Easthorpe House, but this is much reduced to the area north and east of the stable block (now converged to residential use) and the animal pen'.

It is therefore demonstrable that existing development across the wider site has eroded any significance and / or inherent interest associated with the Easthorpe House and parkland, and by virtue the application site. The overarching erosion of wider significance, and the contribution the application site can be considered to make to the setting of all heritage assets of relevance is further reduced when information within the Ruddington Townscape Appraisal is considered.

Specifically, open fields to both the north and south of the application site have been identified within the Ruddington Townscape Appraisal map, as positive open spaces. The site itself, has not.

Therefore, its overarching contribution to this aspect of the setting of the Conservation Area, the settings of all other heritage assets of relevance and Green Belt is minor, with any alterations in access not fundamentally altering this current contribution to significance.

The proposed access exhibits a sinuous route, which seeks to establish a more rural character than, perhaps, a typical driveway / parking bay(s). This design also allows for the provision of additional tree planting along this route if the LPA wished to condition it.

Overall, the access and the proposed use of materials (pea gravel on crushed stone with hardwood edging boards) would not constitute a major 'engineering operation'. It would constitute a very minor engineering operation.

Its appearance which would be indiscernible from any public footpath, bridleway, etc could in no way be considered 'harsh'. Part of the existing site entrance would be returned to open green / grassland to offset the realigned access on land not within the ownership of Easthorpe Farm.

There are no open views of the ground plane of the garden and the openness of the Green Belt in this location would not be impacted.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for Rushcliffe consists of The Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (LPP1) and the Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies (LPP2).

Other material considerations include the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance), and the 2009 Rushcliffe Residential Design Guide.

The relevant policy considerations in the LPP1 are:

- Policy 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
- Policy 4 (Nottingham- Derby Green Belt)
- Policy 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity)
- Policy 11 (Historic Environment)

The relevant policy considerations in the LPP2 are:

- Policy 1 (Development Requirements)
- Policy 21 (Green Belt)
- Policy 28 (Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets).

The relevant policy considerations in the NPPF are:

- Chapter 12 (Achieving well- designed places)
- Chapter 13 (Protecting Green Belt Land)

The site falls within the Green Belt and therefore the proposal falls to be considered under section 13 of the NPPF (Protecting Green Belt Land) and should satisfy the 5 purposes of Green Belt outlined in paragraph 138 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 147 sets out that development in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate which is, by definition, harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 148 states that when considering any planning application, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Exceptions to inappropriate development are set out within the NPPF.

Paragraph 150 states:

***150.** Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*

(b) engineering operations;

This proposal constitutes a very minor engineering operation to re-grass part of the existing access and propose re-instatement of a previous site entrance with a new access.

One of the five purposes of the Green Belt is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The proposal of re-positioning an existing access track would **not** result in a loss of openness or encroachment of development contrary to the purposes of Green Belt within the NPPF.

Conclusions

- The re-positioning of the access drive within the residential curtilage of Easthorpe Gardens is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the landscape or the openness of the Green Belt.
- What is proposed would not form an incongruous feature and within this site it would be in keeping with the rural character and appearance of land north of Flawforth Lane and west of the access road to Easthorpe Farm.
- The proposal will not harm the character and appearance of the area.
- The application is based on the need for domestic and farm movements not to conflict with one another and due to ownership and amenity reasons for the applicant and neighbour to propose the new access point.
- The applicant would be happy for a 'no-dig construction method' to be conditioned in the context of the nearest trees and boundary hedge.
- We believe that no objection in principle should be raised by RBC to the provision of a re-aligned access route be re-instated, provided it is designed to an appropriate standard, respectful of the established character of the area and Green Belt location.
- It will not have any adverse effect on the amenity of Easthorpe Gardens or Easthorpe Farm (it will improve it), whilst being in accordance with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), The Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1, The Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2 and the development plan.
- Overall, the driveway will replicate the existing access but in a location which is not on land forming part of Easthorpe Farmyard. This proposal is not considered to be contrary to Policy 21 and the NPPF in respect of inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it would respect the existing green / open nature of the land around the existing dwelling.
- There would be no detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and so would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it as it would be safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Yours faithfully

Nick Grace

**Nick Grace BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
Partner**

M: 07808 242 099

E: nick@gracemachin.com

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PLANNING & PROPERTY

