

# **WIGNALLS**

Chartered Surveyors, Planning  
Consultants & Land Agents

## **REQUEST AS TO WHETHER PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL FIELD TRACK**

at

Land to the rear of 37 Beconsall Lane, Hesketh Bank, Preston, PR4 6RR

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Wignalls Chartered Surveyors in support of a prior notification application for an agricultural track on land to the rear of no. 37 Becconsall Lane, Hesketh Bank. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr M. O'Hanlon (The Applicant).

## **2.0 PLANNING HISTORY OF THE SITE**

- 2.1 2021/0562/PNP - Application for Determination as to Whether Prior Approval is Required for Details -Erection of an Agricultural storage building. Permitted Development.
- 2.2 2018/0601/FUL - Part retrospective planning application for the (1) Widening of existing agricultural access track and; (2) Application for the construction of an agricultural access track and hardstanding apron in conjunction with existing agricultural building (2017/0068/PNP). Granted 09.08.2018
- 2.3 2017/0068/PNP - Consideration of Details For Prior Approval - Steel portal framed building. Details approved 15.08.2017

## **3.0 AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE**

- 3.1 The Applicant owns approximately 24.7 hectares (61 acres) of agricultural land in West Lancashire. The land farmed is predominantly Grade 1 and 3, as per the Agricultural Land Classification Maps for England and Wales.
- 3.2 The site extends to approximately 11.29 hectares (27 acres) and comprises of existing agricultural storage buildings used by the Applicant for machinery.
- 3.3 The Applicant currently grows trees on site and therefore requires access for machinery to cross the land for undertaking work.
- 3.4 Consistent use of the land by machinery is unsustainable resulting in the compaction of soil, and in the wetter winter months results in the land becoming unworkable and unable to cross. As such, the need for new agricultural field tracks arises.

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3.5 The agricultural field tracks will benefit from an incentive from Natural England whereby various options such as tracks will assist in cutting water pollution. Due to the close proximity of the land to the River Douglas, this is a scheme that will benefit the local watercourses and subsequently the Ribble Estuary which is close to the Hesketh Out Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest.

## **4.0 PROPOSAL**

4.1 The proposal is for the construction of agricultural field tracks in the location shown in red on the submitted Site Location Plan.

4.2 The proposed agricultural field tracks will be approximately 389 metres total length and will be approx. 2.5m in width.

4.3 The field tracks will allow unencumbered access to and from fields and buildings for tractors and other farm vehicles. The current situation is insufficient for this and poses a risk of compaction to the land. The tracks would be upgraded to hardcore for the sole use by the Applicant for the purposes of accessing his adjoining fields. The porous hardcore surface would allow for the natural drainage of rainfall.

4.4 The proposed location for the agricultural field tracks has been considered in depth by the Applicant. The chosen proposed location for the tracks is illustrated on the submitted 'Proposed Location Plan'.

4.5 The Applicant chose the proposed location of the tracks for the following reasons;

1. The topography of the land.
2. Current bare land routes currently used.
3. The most convenient routes to minimise travel across the land.

4.6 Considerable thought has gone into deciding the proposed location of the field tracks and it has been concluded that the location shown on the Proposed Location plan are the best available locations.

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## 5.0 ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Part 6, Class A, Paragraph A.1 sets out limitations under which development would not be permitted by Part A. The proposal would be on part of a larger agricultural unit, would not involve a building, would not relate to livestock, fish farming, slurry or plant and machinery, would be no higher than ground level, and would be more than 25 meters from a trunk or classified road. Consequently, the proposal would meet the requirements of all of the limitations set out under Paragraph A.1.
- 5.2 Conditions to which development permitted by Class A are subject are listed under Paragraph A.2. The development proposal meets these conditions.
- 5.3 Consequently, the main issues to consider under this prior approval application are:
- Whether the proposed development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and hence permitted development; and
  - The effect of the proposed siting and means of construction of the private way on the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings.

### *Whether permitted development*

- 5.4 The Applicant uses the land at Beconsall Lane for agricultural purposes. The Applicant grows trees on the site and therefore the agricultural unit is primarily used for agricultural activities.
- 5.5 The proposed development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit. At present an informal track of exposed earth runs through the site. The proposed track would formalise the track and allow the Applicant to easily access his adjoining fields. As mentioned above, the Applicant, especially during wetter months of the year the informal track becomes muddy, waterlogged and he finds it extremely difficult to navigate farming machinery on the informal track. The majority of the coppicing work is required to be carried out in the wetter months of the year - in winter and early spring. The proposed agricultural track would resolve this issue and allow farming vehicles and machinery to move around the unit more easily, particularly when the land is muddy, waterlogged and wet. The access track will also help confine movement to the surfaced areas only which also is beneficial to prevent damage to trees from wheel and pedestrian compaction.

### *Effect of siting and means of construction on character and appearance*

- 5.6 The Applicant has considered the siting of the agricultural track in depth and will be in a location where there is already an informal arrangement for vehicle movements. The location of the agricultural access track means that there will be no impact upon the use of the agricultural land and the productivity will therefore remain the same.
- 5.7 The track is considered to be in the most logical and sustainable location in terms of operational requirements. The proposed agricultural track is easily accessible from Beconsall Lane and also the Applicants home which is to the front of the site.
- 5.8 In terms of construction, the agricultural track would be simple and functional, consisting of a hardcore base with road planning topping. It would be a permanent feature to which its scale, siting, surfacing and appearance would not be untypical of an agricultural private way which are common within an agricultural landscape.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 For the reasons outlined above, the proposal for an agricultural access field track at the site in our view would be permitted development and the effect of the siting and means of construction on the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings would be acceptable. Therefore, it is our opinion that prior approval should be granted.