



**Design, Access, BNG & Planning  
Statement for a Full Planning  
Application**

**Project Address:**

**Obeden Farm**

**Bell Lane**

**Smarden**

**Ashford**

**Kent**

**TN27 8PR**

**Applicant:**

**Mr. P. Morris**

**Client: Mr. P. Morris**

**Document Title: Design, Access, BNG and Planning Statement**

**Local Planning Authority: Ashford Borough Council**

**Parish: Smarden**

**Our Ref: 2267**

**Proposal: Proposed new access and partial change of use of land to provide shared access serving approved residential dwellings (NOT/2024/2109) and to enhance agricultural access on the farm.**

Issue	Revision	Description	Initial	Date
1	0	Draft	CY	03/04/2025
2	0	Amends	HW	22/04/2025
2	1	LPA Issued	CY	07/05/2025

Copyright ©Price Whitehead Co. Ltd, trading as Price Whitehead. All rights reserved.

No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from Price Whitehead Co. Ltd. If you have received this report in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Price Whitehead Co. Ltd, no other party may use, make use of, or rely on the contents of this report. No liability is accepted by Price Whitehead Co. Ltd for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

The opinions and information provided in the report are on the basis of Price Whitehead Co. Ltd using due skill, care, and diligence in the preparation of the same, and no warranty is provided as to their accuracy.

Our work is undertaken on the understanding that nothing in the final report will be omitted, amended, or misrepresented by the client or any other interested party. This report and its contents remain the property of Price Whitehead Co. Ltd until payment has been made in full.



Price Whitehead specialises in survey, design, and planning consultancy projects with particular specialism in rural projects. We are an award-winning company with particular regard to meeting client's vernacular, environmental and rural business needs.



---

**CONTENTS****Page No.**

2.0	Instructions	4
3.0	Site / Location	4
4.0	Proposal and Background Information	4-6
5.0	Design and Access Statement with BNG Statement	6-11
6.0	Planning Statement	11-13
8.0	Conclusions	13-14
9.0	Caveats	14
10.0	Appendices	14-15

## **2.0 Instructions**

2.1 Price Whitehead has been instructed to prepare and lodge this Full Planning Application on behalf of our client Mr. P. Morris, who is the Applicant and current landowner. Mr. Morris acts for and on behalf of his mother with whom he has farmed for the last 30 years in partnership.

2.2 The proposal seeks approval for the construction of a new access track using an existing highway entrance. This will provide enhanced access to farmland in this part of the farm and will also provide a free draining, dedicated access directly off Bell Lane to two approved Class Q residential dwellings at Obeden Farm in Smarden.

2.3 Permission for the dwellings was granted in accordance with reference number NOT/2024/2109.

## **3.0 Site / Location**

3.1 The application site comprises Obeden Farm, which is in the parish of Smarden. The farm lies about 1.7 miles west of Smarden Village centre and 3 miles southeast of Headcorn.

3.2 In terms of the wider landscape setting, the proposed site is located outside the built-up confines and is in the countryside.

3.3 The existing access serving the farm and approved barn conversions is from Snughorne Lane. The residential barn access will pass through the farm yard. The entrance from Snughorne Lane is lawful and just a few metres from the main highway, which is known as Bell Lane. Whilst the farm business owns the access, it is shared with two other residential properties located to the south east of the access track.

3.4 The aerial image shows the location of the existing highway field gateway serving the farmland and the buildings associated with the consent to convert to 2No. dwellings. This also shows the existing access serving the farm and two other third party properties.



## **4.0 Proposal & Background Information**

4.1 Obeden Farm has been operated by the Applicant's family as a mixed farm, with livestock and poultry enterprises, since 1927. Whilst some aspects of the Applicant's agricultural business have recently been scaled down due to economic changes, the application site remains a working farm to present day, including sheep grazing and lambing activities in the surrounding agricultural fields.

---

4.2 In the application submitted to the LPA in 2024, approval was granted to convert two agricultural buildings into two residential dwellings.

4.3 The neighbouring properties within the grouping known as Obeden Farm Oast, have a right of access, which spurs off the existing farm road so that the first section of the current farm road is shared road with the Oast grouping. It is known that the permission for the two new dwellings on the farm (NOT/2024/2109) was very unpopular with immediate neighbours, as they raised concerns about a potential increase in traffic using the current farm access and how this would impact on their own use and enjoyment of their driveway and property. This application is though, three-fold: -

i) Firstly, the application proposes a separate access off Bell Lane to the two approved dwellings so that existing neighbours' concerns who use the present access from Snughorne Lane, are overcome, and any vehicular harm that is perceived for new dwellings on the farm, will be nullified.

ii) Secondly, the application provides a second access serving the farming business. In this way, the present field access off Bell Lane, which can only be used in good weather when the ground is hard enough, will be able to be used throughout the year. This will enable the farm to move livestock around more readily, and for modern larger agricultural machinery to gain access safely: -

- Presently, there is a farmyard pinch point noted opposite, which severely restricts the size of farm machinery that can access the wider farm land, in all but the driest weather, when the Bell Lane access provides this.
- With agricultural machinery becoming ever larger, the need to provide space and ease of access becomes ever more pressing.
- Agricultural contractors particularly use bigger equipment to be able to offer fast and cost effective services, but in doing so, they need

good access onto farmland, which landowners are having to provide in order to be able to make use of those services.

iii) Thirdly, the present field gate off Bell Lane is accessed across highway verge land and there is not a metalled entrance on to the highway. This limits practical use of the access in addition to ii) above, because when the verge is wet, mud is more likely to track onto the highway, which can be a hazard for other road users. Therefore, the making up of a surfaced access via the established field entrance, will remove this issue and therefore improve highway safety.

4.4 In addition to the above important reasons requiring the new shared access track, this scheme will ensure that the currently shared and somewhat narrow access road onto Snughorne Lane, will not need to be used by larger farm machinery, which can access directly from Bell Lane (assuming the success of this application).

- The proposal will also overcome the NOT/2024/2109 application concerns raised by neighbouring residents regarding the use of Snughorne Lane given they also have a right of access over the present farm access.
- Furthermore, the residents adjacent to the proposed site regard Snughorne Lane as a narrow and rapidly deteriorating rural lane and they had a number of concerns about using the current access during the construction phase of the barn conversions and associated and new potential increase in traffic movements once the new dwellings are completed and sold to future owners.
- The scheme seeks to maintain community harmony, overcome neighbouring concerns, whilst benefiting the farming business for the future.
- The farm business will operate more efficiently with the new access, and ensure road safety for other road users in the vicinity of the current highway field entrance.

4.5 There is a further point that supports the proposal and provides a compelling rationale for the proposed scheme. This is that the existing shared access, which serves both residential and agricultural purposes, will, upon completion of the residential barn conversions, also be the access for the new dwelling occupants by car and on foot presently. This requires those occupants to pass retained working farm buildings, through the farm yard. Where older and less mobile residents or children are concerned, this is of concern and causes potential risk of harm. The proposed new route would overcome that risk entirely.

4.6 The proposed scheme addresses and overcomes all of the above concerns and enables the farm to improve its highway access arrangements.

4.7 The proposal will not alter the existing highway entrance or private farm track from Snughorne Lane. The proposed new access arrangement will result in an enhanced entrance that is more accessible and safer. It will also benefit future occupants of the farm by providing a separate access to serve Obeden Farm.

## **5.0 Design & Access Statement**

5.1 The proposed reconfigured highway access off Bell Lane already benefits from an existing field gate. This is positioned alongside a wide grass verge which flanks the highway.

5.2 It is proposed that the field entrance will become a metalled access with the field gate set back 15 metres from the highway edge to enable vehicles to leave the highway without blocking the road and to comply with highway safety standards. The first 6 metres of access road will be permeable asphalt and the remainder of the route will be free draining stone. This layout ensures no stone tracks onto the highway and is a safety feature.

5.3 Good visibility splays are provided in both directions, with 215m sightlines each way, ensuring that vehicles can easily enter and exit the site safely with unobstructed view.

5.4 The proposed new access complies with all key KCC highway safety requirements and the entrance set back is ample distance from the highway edge for road safety reasons.

5.5 The proposed highway access will be off Bell Lane, whilst the existing access from Snughorne Lane will remain unchanged.

5.6 Drawings submitted accompanying the submission:

- 2267 D01 Existing Site Plan
- 2267 D02 rev2 Proposed Site Plan
- 2267 D03 Location Plan
- 2267 D04 rev1 BNG Existing and Proposed

## **5.7 Materials**

5.7.1 Materials used will be typical for a rural access road such as this. The initial 6 metres section of permeable asphalt will have a width of 5 metres (excluding splays) ensuring that there is a bound surface leading onto the highway to prevent stones from tracking into the highway area and causing safety concerns. The route narrows to 3.7 metres in width elsewhere and this will have a free draining surface made of compacted hardcore sub base over Terram or similar with a compacted stone top dressing, allowing rainwater to soak away in the usual way forming a sustainable free draining surface.

5.7.2 New stock fencing on both sides of the track will comprise stock netting on timber posts placed 2m from the track on both sides. New hedgerow planting details are set out below and in the drawing set.

5.7.3 The current field fence and gate seen on the existing site layout plan will be removed as the new fencing and hedging that will flank the track will form a stock proof boundary.

5.7.4 A short section of roadside hedging will be removed on each side of the present gate opening, and any loss of hedgerow will be more than compensated for in the new hedgerow planting that is proposed.

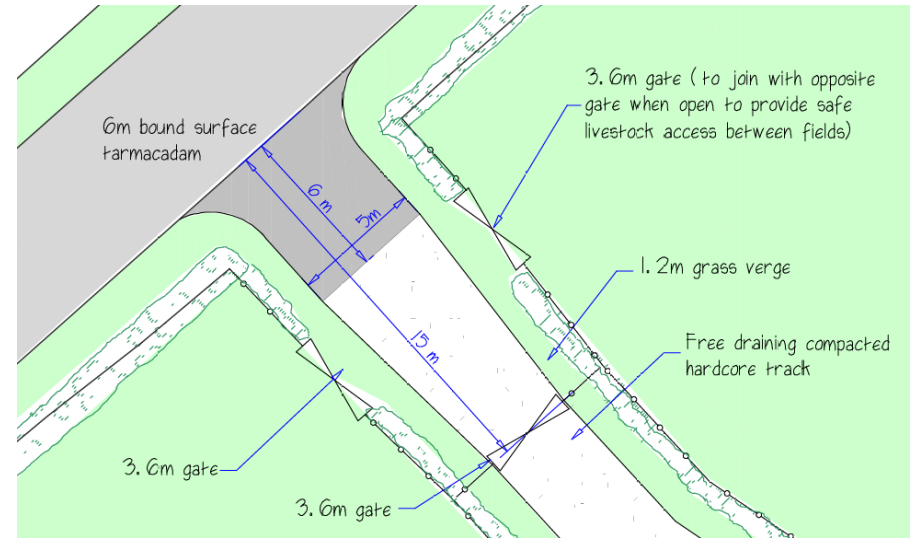
- This is seen more clearly on the BNG drawing (2267 D04 Rev 1).

## 5.8 Dimensions

5.8.1 A pair of galvanized field gates, each with a width of 3.6m, will secure the access where the track narrows to 3.7m in width.

5.8.2 Two additional galvanized field gates (3.6m in width) will be installed on either side of the proposed track, enabling them to connect when open and providing safe livestock access between fields.

- The increased opening width onto the highway enables larger machinery to access the farmland directly off the highway and enter either side of the track with ease. See drawing opposite and the main drawing set.



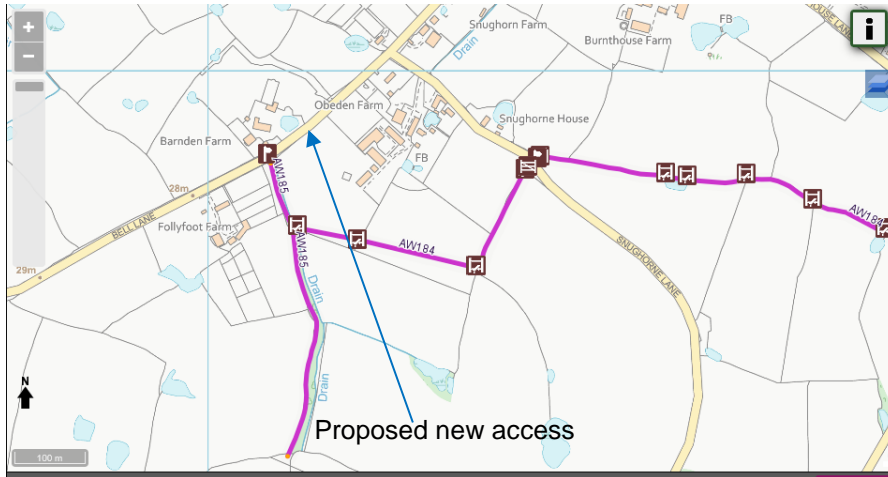
5.8.3 There will be a retained grass verge, 1.2m wide, on either side of the new track along its entire length to assist with natural water drainage and provide biodiversity net gain (BNG) and habitat protection to new hedgerows.

5.8.4 The proposed free draining track will result in a total hardstanding area of 576 sqm. The track will provide access to the approved residential curtilage for the barn conversion and join the existing hardcore surface within the site of the approved residential scheme, as shown on the proposed drawing set.

## 5.9 Consideration of Public Rights of Way (PROW)

5.9.1 There are no PROWs that pass through the application site, as the following image confirms. The nearest footpaths are located to the west and southwest of the proposed entrance, running south and east, and connecting to the wider PROW network.

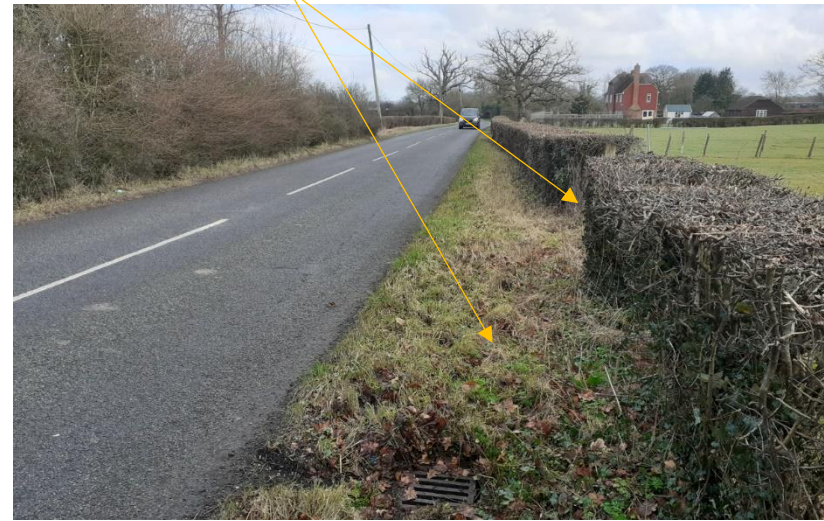
5.9.2 To that end, none of the existing PROWs will be affected by the development, and there is no requirement for new arrangements in this regard.



## 5.10 Landscaping

5.10.1 The drawing accompanying the application confirms that a small section of the existing hedgerow will be removed to provide a wider opening for the proposed highway entrance and to ensure the required visibility splays. See the existing hedging alongside the highway in the images opposite and on the following page.

The existing opening onto the highway and the grass verge.



The image above shows the highway detailing from the current Bell Lane entrance.

Images show that good visibility can be achieved in both directions.



Existing field gate and hedging alongside Bell Lane

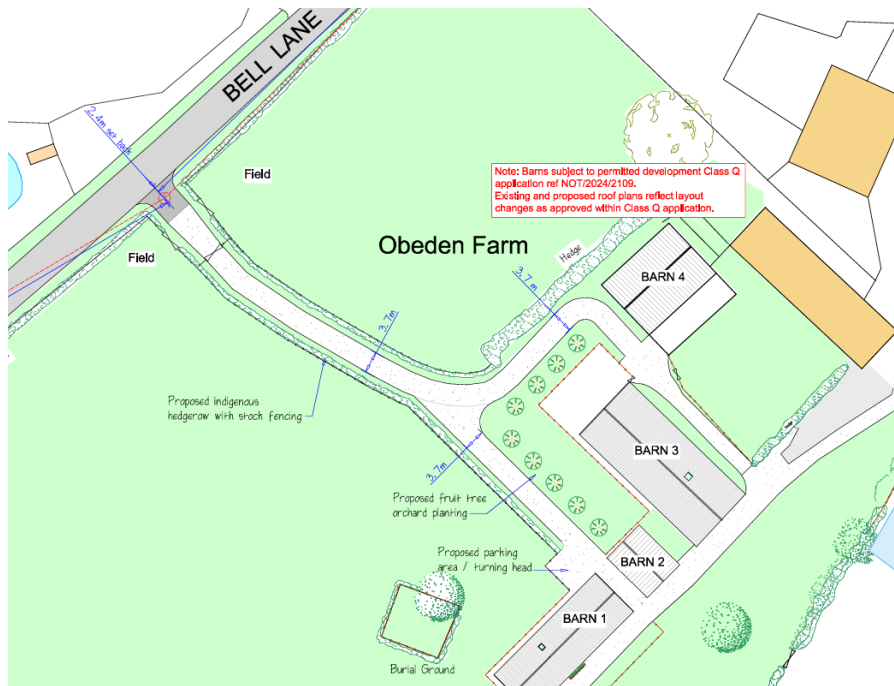


The existing stock fencing will be removed, and moved alongside the proposed location of the track, as indicated. The buildings at the far ground are the barns to be converted.

5.10.3 To mitigate landscape impact of the new access arrangement and the loss of grassland, the proposal includes environmental enhancement measures that will outweigh the potential harm caused by the development. These include:

- Planting two rows of native hedging along the length of the track and linking with established hedgerows as the drawing shows.

- Improving the condition of the retained grassland and the area used for the proposed grass verge on either side by seeding with wildflowers and managed for wildlife.
- Planting a small orchard with a total of 9No. fruit trees to the side of Barn 3 and alongside the new track, to improve the aesthetics of the site and create new natural habitats for wildlife. Ample distance is provided between each tree to ensure there is sufficient space for growth and future upkeep.



The image above shows the proposed site plan, including the landscape enhancements and fruit tree/orchard planting.

## 5.11 BNG Statement

5.11.1 This application is subject to a 10% statutory mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement because the footprint of the proposed development exceeds 25sqm and does not qualify for any exemptions. The site area (outlined by the red line on the drawing set) is calculated to be 1,381 square metres/0.13 Ha including all BNG land).

5.11.2 The site does not fall within any designated landscapes or priority habitats, and the proposed development is less than 5,000 square metres, as confirmed above. Hence, the Small Site Metric Calculation Tool has been used to determine the BNG value for this proposal.

5.11.3 It is demonstrated in the above Design and Access Statement that the ecological mitigation hierarchy has been applied throughout the design and preparation of this application, beginning with avoidance, followed by mitigation, and concluding with a compensation strategy.

5.11.4 The calculation spreadsheet shows that the baseline habitat unit is 0.4760, while the post-development unit is 0.5246.

5.11.5 The proposed landscape enhancement measures will generate a total of 0.0486 habitat units and 1.1738 hedgerow units, resulting in a net gain of 10.22% following implementation. As such, the proposal exceeds and complies with the mandatory 10% BNG target for this type of development, as required by the National policy and the Borough's current guidance.

5.11.6 The headline results of the metric calculation are shown in the table below, confirming that the BNG target is appropriate, and the trading rules are stratified.

Site Name	Obeden Farm, Bell Lane, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8PR	
Sheet Name	Headline Results	
<b>Headline Results</b>		
Headline	BNG Targets Met ✓	
Trading Rules	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓	
Next steps	Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric A	
Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.4760
	Hedgerow units	Zero Units Baseline
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline
Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.5246
	Hedgerow units	1.1738
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0486 ✓
	Hedgerow units	1.1738
	Watercourse units	0.0000
total net % change	Habitat units	10.22% ✓
	Hedgerow units	% target not appropriate
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate
Habitats units required to meet target	0.0000	
Hedgerow units required to meet target	0.0000	
Watercourse units required to meet target	0.0000	



proposal. The property known as Oakdene benefits from its own access off Bell Lane and boundary fencing.

- [04/00516/AS](#) - Garden room to the side. **Permitted.**
- [01/00178/AS](#) - Detached garage (resubmission). **Permitted.**
- [00/01122/AS](#) - Detached pitched roof garage. **Permitted.**

6.2 The planning history above confirms that there are no relevant applications related to the construction of the new highway access at this site prior to this application.

6.3 With consideration to key local planning policies, it is noted that:

- The site is not within a Conservation Area.
- The site is not within an AONB (Now known as National Landscape), an SSSI, a wildlife site, a nature reserve, an ancient woodland, or any other designative protection.
- The proposed site is not a scheduled monument or protected by archaeological designation.
- There are no TPO's on the site.

6.4 The proposal meet the policy criteria at both local and national levels and is justified as outlined below.

6.4.1 **Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to 2030** - Policies considered within this proposal are:

- SP1 – Strategic Objectives
- ENV1 – Biodiversity
- ENV3a – Landscape Character and Design
- TRA7 – The Road Network and Development

## 6.0 Planning Statement

### 6.1 Obeden Farm Planning History

- [NOT/2024/2109](#) - Prior Approval for the Change of Use and Conversion of 2No. Agricultural Buildings into 2No. Residential Dwellings with associated amenities. **Prior Approval is Given.**

NB: The planning history below relates to Oakdene, which has been the farmhouse for Obeden Farm for decades. The original farmhouse was sold many years ago and is now physically separate, with some distance from this

6.4.2 Smarden Parish Council is currently drafting the neighbourhood plan, which is still in the regulatory stages. The above policy is therefore considered as the key policy reference for this application. The Applicant is aware that the Parish Council would have preferred application NOT/2024/2109 to have provided the access scheme detailed in this proposal at that time. This is known because of the objections to the scheme that the Parish Council received from the neighbouring property occupiers benefiting from a right of access over the existing farm access road. Given this, the support of the Parish Council is expected for the scheme herein.

6.4.2.1 The proposal is designed to blend with the surrounding environment while providing a safer and enhanced access arrangement for the future residents of the two converted barns at Obeden Farm, and to support current and future needs of the farming business.

6.4.2.2 The proposed access route will improve accessibility to the residential curtilage by providing direct access off the main highway, thereby minimising traffic movement through the existing narrow countryside lane (Snughorne), which is shared with other properties.

6.4.2.3 The new access arrangement will separate residential vehicle movements from the working farmyard access.

6.4.2.4 Reusing the existing field gate opening from Bell Lane in a design led application process will ensure the highest possible safety standards for all road users.

6.4.2.5 The proposal is designed to fully comply with KCC highway safety standards, with sufficient setback distance and good visibility splays in both directions of the proposed track. Also, the design uses materials that are commonly found in the locality for this type of access.

6.4.2.6 There will be increase in traffic movements associated with the application given that the residential use of the two farm buildings to be converted already benefit from permission with an access via the current farm drive. The Applicant seeks a planning condition to ensure that all vehicle movements associated with the NOT/2024/2109 scheme, only use the proposed access set out in this application. This will ensure existing neighbours who use the current access are satisfied their amenity will be protected, and that their concerns, and those commented upon by the Parish Council, are overcome. The free draining surface of the track will not give rise to any surface water runoff issues.

- Key policy requirements are therefore adhered with for TRA7 and SP1 in the above.

6.4.2.7 ALP 2030 Policy ENV1 and ENV3a highlight the importance of ensuring that development preserves the biodiversity and landscape character of the site. This application includes good environmental enhancements, such as the planting of new native hedgerows and an orchard. These, combined with the proposed wildflower seeding to verges, will combine to mitigate the removal of a small amount of highway hedging and existing grassland required to facilitate the new entrance and the construction of the trackway. This is in accordance with the policies referenced above, as well as the BNG requirements.

### 6.4.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024

#### 6.4.3.1 Paragraph 8 – Achieving sustainable development

- **Social objectives:** The proposed access is primarily intended for residential use in association with NOT/2024/2109, and to enable the larger machinery now used routinely, to gain better access to the farmland. The enhanced access off Bell Lane will provide direct access from the highway to the residential curtilages of approved

buildings, in a sensitive design. Enhanced accessibility to the site will provide improved and safer access and future management for new residents, protect the amenity of existing residents who will continue to use the Snughorne Lane entrance, and provide a safer access for farm workers from Bell Lane to maintain the farm business sustainability. The proposal therefore serves a number of purposes in terms of its social objectives.

- **Economic objectives:** The construction of the track will require the use of local contractors, thereby providing a direct economic benefit to the local community. Additionally, the provision of a second access dedicated along most of the route to residential use will increase the attractiveness of the property for potential buyers, thereby enhancing its marketability. Once occupied, the new residents will contribute to the local economy through their purchasing habits, including shopping at local supermarkets, farm shops and supporting other nearby businesses in the locality. The farming business will be able to operate the farm land more efficiently by using appropriately sized machinery to manage farm operations which will provide economic benefit to the business.
- **Environmental Objectives:** The improvements to the environment and landscape will considerably mitigate the minimal harm to biodiversity and existing habitats caused by the proposal. This is evidenced by the BNG calculation results, which show a total net gain of 10.22% following the implementation of the scheme. This headline result exceeds the minimum statutory 10% BNG required by the government.

6.4.3.2 NPPF paragraph 115 to 116 refer to the assessment of development proposals, stating that an application should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. This proposal improves provisions for all users, enhancing the safety of the future occupants who live in the new dwellings at the application site and also overcoming the issue of larger farm machinery accessing the wider farmland.

## 7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The application proposes improvements to an established farm (field) access by the creation of a metalled entrance and dedicated track surface. This will serve new dwellings and land management at Obeden Farm. The proposal aims to separate the existing shared access, which currently accommodates both third party residential right of access over, and agricultural uses.

7.2 The proposed access will reduce the number of traffic movements on the existing access track in terms of farm machinery movements which will be split between both entrances (the Bell Lane entrance favouring larger machinery). Separating new dwelling traffic movements away from the current access alongside the agricultural benefit identified will deliver mutual benefits for all users, enhancing safety and accessibility.

7.3 Environmental mitigation has been carefully considered in the design of this proposal, and the submitted BNG Plan reflects this, demonstrating adherence to statutory mandatory 10% requirements for this type of development. Any perceived harm resulting from the loss of existing natural habitats will be mitigated by the proposed ecological enhancement measures.

7.4 The design is demonstrated to adhere with key planning policies and has also been designed to meet KCC Highways requirements.

7.5 There will be no detrimental impact resulting from this minor development, and no harm to the landscape, ecology, or neighbouring properties, including listed buildings. The proposal does not lead to overlooking or any other negative effects that would need to be considered.

7.6 The application is supported by the appropriate set of drawings, a design and access statement, a BNG statement and a planning statement, all of

which demonstrate compliance with local and national policies as well as highway safety standards.

7.7 We therefore invite the LPA to support the application lodged and look forward to the scheme being favourably viewed.

### **8.0 Caveats**

8.1 The statement is provided on behalf of Mr. P. Morris and is produced for the specific purpose of providing a Design, Access & Planning Statement in connection with a Full planning application.

8.2 No responsibility whatsoever is accepted by any person other than the Applicants. The details are for planning consideration purposes only.

### **9.0 Appendices**

#### 9.1 Mapping

Below – Planning designations – not applicable.



Below- Flood Zone Map – not applicable to this site.

The map shows the flood risk to your site and the surrounding area.



---

## 9.2 Policy Wording

### Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to 2030

#### **Policy TRA7**

The Road Network and Development Developments that would generate significant traffic movements must be well related to the primary and secondary road network. New accesses and intensified use of existing accesses onto the road network will not be permitted if a clear risk of road traffic accidents or significant traffic delays would be likely to result. Proposals which would generate levels and types of traffic movements, including heavy goods vehicle traffic, beyond that which local roads could Price Whitehead reasonably accommodate in terms of capacity and road safety will not be permitted. Applicants must demonstrate that traffic movements to and from the development can be accommodated, resolved, or mitigated to avoid severe cumulative residual impacts. In some cases, this may require exploring the delivery of mitigation measures prior to the occupation of a development. Consideration of mitigation and impact will be assessed through the fulfilment of the requirements of Policy TRA8.

### National Planning Policy Framework NPPF

#### **Paragraph 115**

In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: (a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the

type of development and its location; (b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; (c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code 48 ; and (d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

#### **NPPF Paragraph 116**

Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.