

**LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE SCREENING SITE**

**THISTLEWORTH FARM, GRINDERS LANE, DIAL POST, WEST SUSSEX RH13 8NR**

**PROPOSED LAND-RAISING**

**SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT (September 2020)**

This Statement is entitled 'Proposed Land-Raising', however, the works have already been carried out, therefore, it is a retrospective application seeking full Planning Permission.

The land, immediately to the North of the screening site, which has been the subject of unauthorised landfilling consisted of low lying poor agricultural meadow situated between the A24 arterial road to the West and the large man-made earth bunds to the East.

This land form was the result of the engineering works which took place in the 1990s when very considerable improvements were made to the A24 route by the creation of the Dial Post and Ashington by-passes.

The final road levels were set higher than the adjacent existing fields to the East and the residual spoil was modelled to form very extensive earth bunds further to the East, principally to protect the amenities of Thistleworth Farmhouse which is set a short distance further East. (Thistleworth Barn did not have permission for conversion to residential at that time, however, it is situated in the same area and now does have the benefit of conversion to a residential dwelling.)

No attempt was made at the time of the construction of the highway spoil bunds to blend them naturally into the existing landscape and they were left with very obvious man-made contours. Considerable areas of this visually upsetting landscape still exist at other locations on the site.

Consequently, when the Applicant was engaged in forming the foundations for the agricultural barn to be sited at the extreme North-East end of the subject land it was decided to utilise the excavated spoil from the proposed building site, the associated yard and track areas as landfilling in order to raise levels and to create much improved agricultural meadow facilities.

The excavated material, estimated at approximately 4,500 cu.m., was taken from the building site, yard and track and deposited at the North-West end of the site.

Imported hardcore was then utilised to commence the agricultural barn base, yard and access track in accordance with the Planning permission. (N.B. Permission was gained at Appeal.)

Additional screened and acceptable clean waste, estimated at approximately 8,500 cu.m., has been added to the relocated on-site material to raise levels and to form a roadside bund. This waste was from the immediately adjacent screening site.

(N.B. At the time the material was placed on this site the screening site use was still unauthorised, i.e. it was prior to Planning permission being granted.)

The bund is to protect the flat meadow area where attendance to livestock can be undertaken in relative peace and for overall noise attenuation purposes either to or from the site. It forms the first

line of defence to protect the residential Listed dwellings to the East.

Reference to the application drawings shows that the extent of land-raising is limited to the extreme Northern end of the site covering an area of approximately 1.3 acres (0.53 hectares).

Because the works undertaken in the 1990s to form the improved A24 roadway created a situation where the meadow land immediately adjacent to the East of the new dual-carriageway was left lower than the road levels, these areas were trapped and the meadows were constantly boggy and waterlogged. Accordingly, they were very poor for agricultural purposes throughout long periods of the year and were very difficult to maintain. Even now the large bunds are difficult and potentially dangerous for agricultural machinery.

The Applicant has now raised these levels to such an extent as to create more natural looking land undulations with the gradual partial disguising of the obvious man-made bunds.

Evidence of these works can be fully seen from a site visit as an existing Public Right of Way crosses the entire site.

Once the grass grows and with regular maintenance being undertaken a visually pleasant and natural landscape will result.

Also, machinery for maintenance, harvesting etc will be able to manage these areas in a safe manner and livestock will be able to access the land throughout the year.

There are only minimal completion works to be undertaken and these are:

- a. The provision of a staircase/ steps construction to the extreme Northern end of the existing North/South Public Right of Way. (Details of an acceptable staircase have been provided by Mr Nigel Bird for guidance purposes.)
- b. The erection of stockproof fencing to all perimeter areas to match existing constructions.
- c. The installation of stiles where the Public Rights of Way are interrupted by fencing lines.
- d. Feathering-in of the remaining roadside bund and adjacent field areas including topsoiling and seeding.

These works will be integrated with the additional works associated with the adjoining screening site which requires the formation of a balancing pond and levelling.

Conditions attached to the approval for the screening site dictate that this work must be carried out very soon.

Works will be undertaken within normal working week hours and be carried out by a 360° excavator, dumper and bulldozer/compactor. Most of this equipment is already on site associated with the screening site and any wheel washing of vehicles travelling onto the highway will be undertaken on that site utilising the wheel washing facility. In fact, it is unlikely that any highway implications will occur at all.

The existing tracks to the South and East of the site are noted on the Planning drawings but it is unlikely that they will be used for the completion works described. They will be used, including an access gate as detailed, for entry on to the land and access to the agricultural barn which has been started, i.e. site cleared and hardcore base placed. Access to the subject site will be via the screening site only for finishing off detail work.

**POLICY W8 OF THE WEST SUSSEX WASTE LOCAL PLAN APRIL 2014  
RECOVERY OPERATIONS INVOLVING DEPOSIT OF INERT WASTE TO LAND**

- a. Prior to the unauthorised land-raising operations taking place the application site could not be economically used for agricultural purposes, in particular as grazing land, because of the poor quality grass, the steep contours and the wet conditions throughout many months of the year.

The raising of the land, allied to proper levels of drainage, is a clear benefit for the poor areas of the site which can then be used together throughout the year with the Applicant's adjacent land.

- b. The material which has been used is soil which has been excavated from a few metres away, i.e. the other side of the Eastern bund, combined with imported acceptable and screened waste from the adjoining site.
- c. The intention is to raise levels to give all year round good agricultural land achieved by the use of waste material.
- d. The material which has been re-used is suitable for its intended use.
- e. The amount used will provide stable grazing land over the areas concerned and provide more amicable and safe land contours for machinery and grazing as well as visually improving the landscape.
- f. There are no unacceptable impacts on natural reserves and other environmental constraints.
- g. The proposal is not within a protected landscape area but the operations improve land quality and visual quality.
- h. Not applicable.
- i. This proposal accords with the aims set out in Policy W20 regarding restoration and aftercare. It represents the first stage of creating interesting, usable, high quality and practicable agricultural land.

The works are appropriate for the location and will maintain and improve the Public Right of Way and be maintained in the future.

The amenity of nearby residents will be enhanced.

The land will be used for livestock grazing, production of quality grassland and regularly maintained.