

Planning Statement

Job no.	3092
Job title	Australia Farm, Access road
Date	27 June 2016

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Subject In support of Planning Application

This Statement must be read in conjunction with the full planning application documents and drawings. Illustrations within this document do not take precedence over the formal application scheme drawings and are intended primarily to illustrate points made in the text.

1.0 Context

- 1.1 The application to which this planning submission relates seeks the regularisation of the installation and adjustment of an access to an approved ménage at Australia Farm, Meltham. The application reference for the approved scheme is 2013/62/90300/W
- 1.2 The application site known as Australia Farm, lies within the greenbelt to the South East of Meltham (Figure 1 below). The property and associated land forms a reasonably sized agricultural holding of approximately 13.2 hectares, which is primarily used for grazing and paddocks.

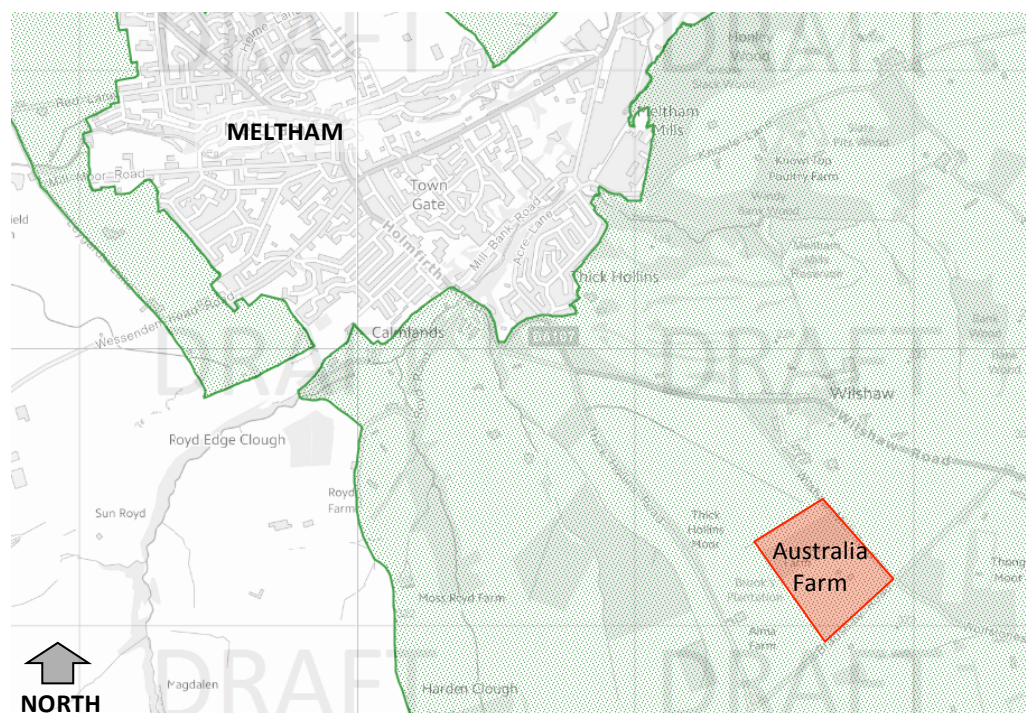


Figure 1 – Kirklees Maps, Green Belt Map

- 1.3 The approved access for the ménage was proposed within the red line boundary shown below, utilising the existing private driveway and via a fairly arduous route through the existing farm buildings.

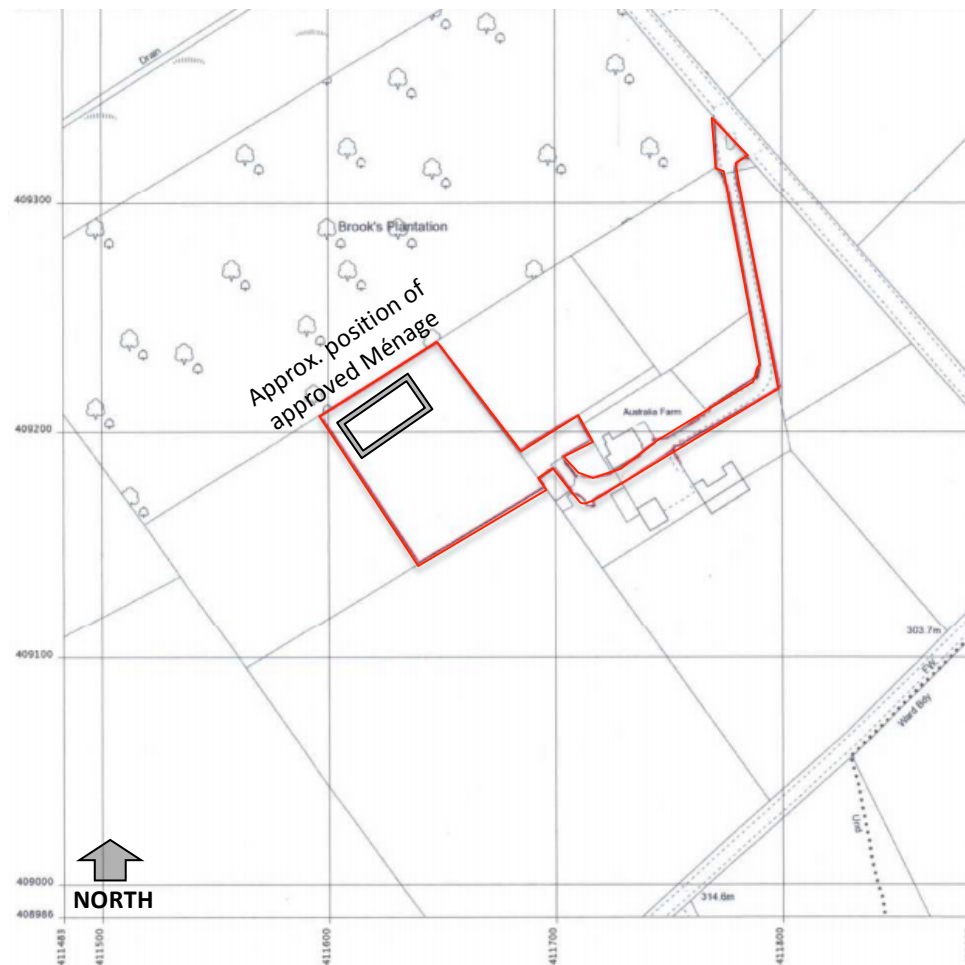
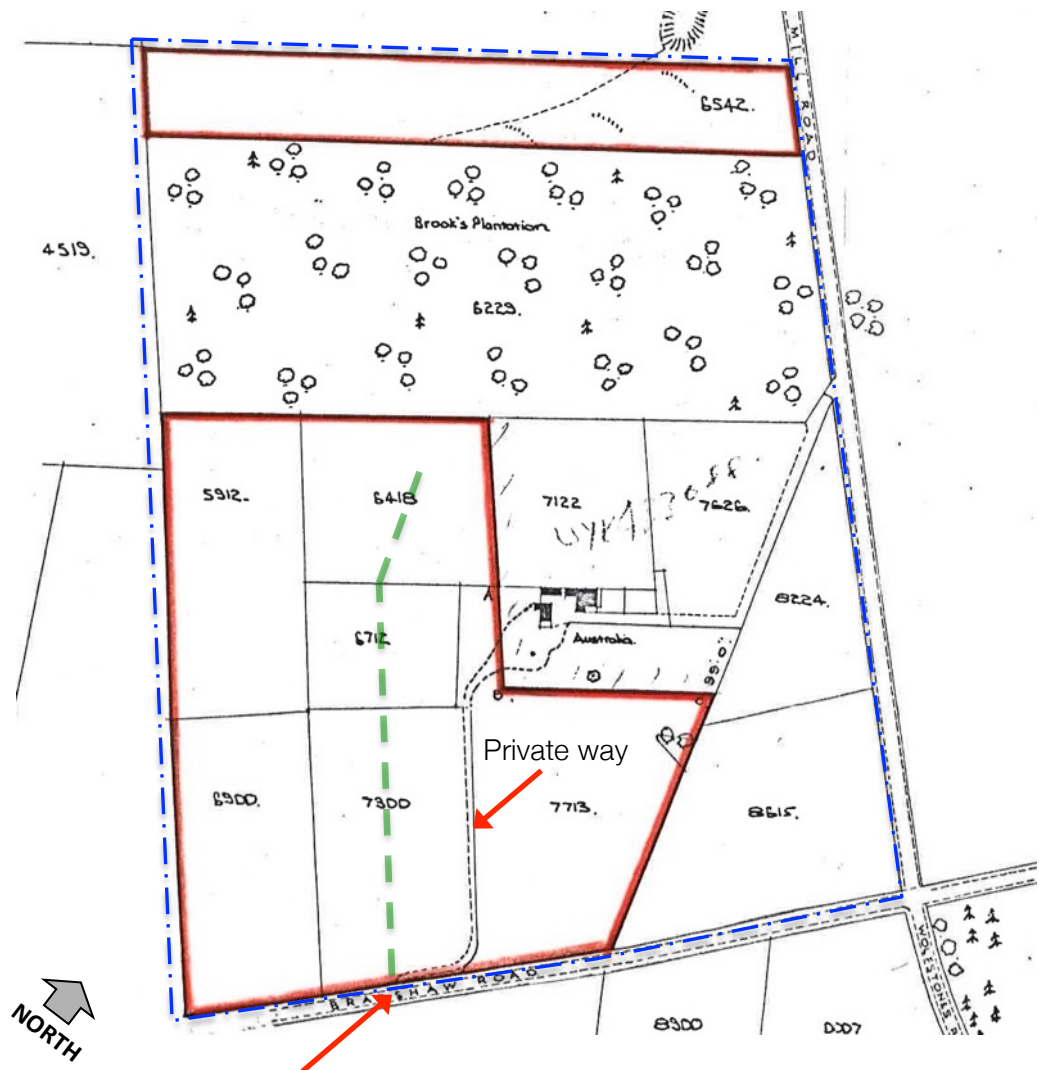


Figure 2 – Site Location Plan (2013/62/90300/W)

2.0 History

- 2.1 As referenced in 2.3 the approved access to the ménage was proposed through the existing farm buildings and via a convoluted route through a rear garden gate and crossing a field. The route has proved to be unmanageable in practice due to the size and turning capabilities of some of the vehicles requiring access to the ménage.
- 2.2 In light of the above, the applicant reverted to using an alternative private way to the south of the site, accessed off Bradshaw road via an existing gate and highway access. This access and track was already in use for other farm vehicles requiring access to the fields to the west of the site.
- 2.3 The existing track entered the site centrally to the larger field to the south of the site and followed the field boundary into the cluster of buildings at the centre of the site. As this land was purchased under a separate title this track and access is likely to have provided a separate means of access to a second dwelling at some point in the property's history (see Figure 3 overleaf). Copies of OS data (1980) and previous title plans (ca.1995) clearly indicate this private way.



Existing access through field wall via Bradshaw Rd

Figure 3 – Title Plan (ca. 1995) of separate land title

- 2.4 Owing to weather conditions and associated ground conditions this track also proved very problematic. There is significant surface water run off from the highway and fields adjacent into Australia Farm and it can quickly become waterlogged, leading to trailers and horse boxes getting stuck in the fields on numerous occasions. Vehicles were also tracking mud out of the site and on to the highway leading to unsafe road conditions and complaints to the applicant.
- 2.5 The applicant wishes to have a safe and practical means of access to the ménage for the exercise and training of horses and the delivery of haylage and related apparatus. The applicant also requires safe, practical and regular access to the fields to the rear of the site for the grazing of livestock and horses.
- 2.6 The revised position of the existing track addresses the concerns listed above and provides direct vehicular access to the ménage and land locked fields to the rear of the land holding, via an existing and long standing highway access (pre 1980's).
- 2.7 The new track (shown on Figure 3 with a dashed green line) has been constructed to a standard commensurate to the type of vehicle that will be using it. To include traditional farm vehicles and those more accustomed to the rural recreation that the site has been approved for, such as domestic horse boxes and trailers.

- 2.8 The track has been surfaced and levelled with a recycled aggregate surface topping, providing a clean, solid and fully permeable base without adversely affecting the land beneath during periods of inclement weather.
- 2.9 The highway ingress / egress onto Bradshaw Road has also been improved and widened to improve site lines and enable longer vehicles or towing vehicles to turn in / out without crossing the carriageways.
- 2.10 The previous access track (as indicated on Figure 3) has been extinguished and returned to use as grazing land to provide sustainable and suitably sized grazing stock for the current needs and projected future needs of the agricultural uses of the farm.
- 2.11 Below is a recent photograph of the improved access off Bradshaw Lane (Figure 4) and a photo from street view of the previous access ca. 2010 (Figure 5).



Figure 4



Figure 5

3.0 Planning Policy

- 3.1 This application is being made following a letter issued by Paul Wood of planning enforcement investigating an alleged unauthorised access road - COMP/16/0171.
- 3.2 This application seeks the retrospective approval for the formalisation and adjustment of an existing farm track, which is accessed off Bradshaw Road to the South of the site.
- 3.3 If prior assistance had been sought these works would have been applied for under permitted development via, "Application for Prior Notification of Proposed Agricultural or Forestry development – proposed road" for the 'formation or alteration of a private way'. In this particular case for the alteration of a private way.
- 3.4 With appreciation that this application cannot be classed as a 'prior notification', and having considered the feasibility of the works carried out on the same criteria as those required for permitted development, it is believed there is valid justification for the 'development'.
- 3.5 The alleged breach discussed in para. 3.1 is on the grounds of unauthorised development in the green belt, covered by 'NPPF 9. Protecting Green Belt Land'. Approval is sought on the basis that the revised access track / private way does not adversely affect the 'openness of the green belt'.
- 3.6 Given the existing private way has been upgraded and its position amended and the existing private way has been returned to grazing land (open green belt), the new access track is considered to have a neutral affect on the amenity of the green belt and its openness as it an almost like for like change. Accepted that the new access track is slightly longer than the existing track, this change is considered negligible in terms of an observer's outlook onto the green belt. Any negative impact that could be determined from this extension can be outweighed by the enhanced benefit to the recreation activities carried out on the farm.
- 3.7 The ménage was approved on the grounds of 'very special circumstances' as defined under PPG2. The planning statement at that time noted the favourable consideration given to proposals for diversification in the green belt, where the development preserves the openness of the green belt. Those special circumstances still exist and the construction of this access track results in the sustained use of the farm and associated buildings in to the longer term.
- 3.8 Kirklees UDP policy D10 is also applicable, allowing applications to be considered for outdoor sport and recreation and this development aids to enhance an existing facility and provide a means to continue the recreational usage discussed on the site.
- 3.9 This application is also compliant with Kirklees UDP policy T10, as the material change in vehicular movements is nil. The existing highway network is in place and the proposals aim to complement the appearance of the development (by improving the access situation off Bradshaw Lane). Furthermore, the development will actually improve highway safety by improving visibility splays and reducing the deposit of mud onto the highway.