

APPEAL REF APP/ R3325/ W/ 20/3259668

Site Address: Land North of Ansford Hill, Ansford, Somerset BA7 7PD

Suggested 30 minute site walk for Hayley Butcher MSc Bsc (Hons) MRTPI

This suggested 30 minute site walk for the Appeal Inspector starting at Castle Cary station was compiled jointly by representatives of Castle Cary Town Council, Ansford Parish Council, Care4Cary and CPRE Somerset, following a group walk at 2.30pm on Monday 25 October. The weather was fine, and visibility was good.

A parking ticket can be obtained in the station car-park, or from the ticket office.



Screenshot- taken from the Somerset County Council Footpath Network website - the Appeal site lies to the south of the station and west of WN 2/16 (the Monarch's Way), and is bounded by the A371

1. From the station platforms the Ridgeline formed by the A371 at the top of the appeal site can be perceived. It provides a clear edge to the settlement. Only the tops of a few roofs on the south side of the road can be seen. It is not clear whether they are a few scattered houses, or the edge of a village or town.

2. The footbridge over the railway at the eastern end of the station gives a good view of both the appeal site and the long undeveloped escarpment (or scarp) which it forms part of. From this elevated position above the railway line, the escarpment can be appreciated as a highly prominent and locally distinctive physical landform which will be harmed by the development. To the east there are views of Creech Hill and Lamyatt Beacon. To the west there are views of Glastonbury Tor across the green landscape of the Brue Valley.

3. Cross the railway line and walk up the Monarch's Way in the direction of Ansford to meet the A371 (Footpath WN 2/16 shown above). There are unrestricted views of the adjacent appeal site on the western side of the path as there is no hedge. There are frequent gaps in the hedge on the eastern side of the path. Far reaching views along the escarpment can therefore be enjoyed in both westerly and easterly directions. It is evident that the escarpment is a continuous landform crossed by the Monarch's Way.

4. The Moss Naylor Young traffic report (MNY report) commissioned by Care4Cary comprehensively sets out the safety concerns for those who are respectively able-bodied, children, the elderly and the disabled wishing to cross the A371 from the appeal site. It raises serious doubts about the sustainability of the proposal. This suggested walk passes all three mooted A371 crossing points referred to in the MNY report. The text highlights the dangers, which arise from the presented traffic data, the high mean speeds recorded, and the narrowness of the carriageway.

5. Having arrived at the A371, turn right in order to descend Ansford Hill to the SW corner of the appeal site, passing the proposed vehicle site access point (it is also one of the three mooted pedestrian crossing points in the MNY report).

6. The low hedge down Ansford Hill/A371 along the southern boundary of the site affords unrestricted and continuous views of the site to both pedestrians and those in passing cars. There are superb views of Glastonbury Tor to the NW and Creech Hill to the NE, both of which are Special Landscape Features in the Mendip Local Plan. These locally famous views from the Ansford Hill would be restricted by houses in the field.

7. At the SW corner of the site, it is evident that any crossing of the A371 at this point would be in close proximity to the sharp near 90 degree bend. There is no crossing here but the MNY report confirms our joint view that this would be the ' desire route ' that residents of the proposed development would wish to take to town. It is also much the quickest way to get to Castle Cary Primary School at the far side of the town on South Street. In our opinion, even if a zebra or pelican crossing were to be installed here, a motorbike or HGV coming round the nearby sharp bend at speed from the north would have limited stopping distance due to the alignment of the road.

8. Walk back up Ansford Hill/A371 to the point where the Monarch's Way meets the A371. This is the third mooted crossing point in the MNY report. The text describes why the route to the town centre from this point via Lower Ansford is not a good route for utility users, and is not suitable at night.

9. Continue up Ansford Hill. It is evident that the width of the footway varies considerably, and there are signs of damage from passing traffic. This would be the quickest route to the secondary school (Ansford Academy) from the proposed development. A water stop valve concrete post has been badly damaged near this point, presumably by an HGV which has mounted the pavement. The footway is particularly narrow in the 'hollow way' section above Firtree Lodge and Cleeve House, which is enclosed by steep banks. With regular maintenance, which does not occur at present, the overhanging nettles and other vegetation could be cut back to the stacked railway sleepers that provide a wall. However, the footpath would still be very narrow, and the experience of passing cars and HGVs, including the wind effect, is frightening.

10. In our opinion schoolchildren would not be able to walk two abreast in safety on this section, even with regular clearance of the vegetation, and there is limited room for a double buggy. Near the top of the bend the footway runs out, and it is then necessary to cross the A371 to get to a footway on the other side in order to reach Ansford Academy. Pupils will need to recross the road at the designated crossing at the top of the hill in order to get to the school on the other side. All the dangers of crossing this busy road are itemised in the MNY report.

11. Walk back down Ansford Hill/A371 to the point where the Monarch's Way meets the A371, and descend the footpath back to the station. From this southerly direction there are superb views of Glastonbury Tor to the NW, and frequent views of Creech Hill to the NE. The great expanse of the rural Brue Valley landscape, and the wider landscape beyond, can be admired during this descent of the scarp on the Monarch's Way.

12. For a better view of the scarp from the north side of the railway line, walk through the stile at the east end of the station building. The entrance to Footpath WN 2/26 is immediately on your right. Walk through the first field, and then into the second, from which it is possible to perceive the scarp as a continuous landscape feature running across the landscape and including the appeal site. It is not necessary to continue further on this footpath (which runs along the Brue Valley floor and leads on to WN 2/38 and WN 2/40 to where it meets the Wyke road).

13. Return to Castle Cary Station.

14. Time permitting, a second walk could be taken to the centre of town following the Appellant's proposed route for residents of the development- via Lower Ansford from Ansford Hill/A371, crossing Victoria Gardens, Florida Fields, Churchfield Drive and using Victoria Road to access the town centre; then returning to the station via Station Road.

Copies to:

Hayley Butcher MSc BSc (Hons) MRTPI
The Appellants
South Somerset District Council

FR/ 3.11.21

Sarah

MS RT- 24

landsape

-1st

— (ranped

o (lae fee

Play

2-3rd

what was 10/11