



25th March 2025

Professional Testimonial – Vehicle Access at Cobham House Vineyard Field Gate, Gold Street, Cobham

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a qualified HGV driver with over 4 years of experience. I have held a full HGV licence since 2021 and I am proficient in operating a range of commercial vehicles, including rigid and articulated lorries. My work regularly involves vehicles up to 32 tonnes, with various axle configurations and lengths up to 8metres. I have extensive experience driving in rural areas with challenging access points.

I am writing to provide professional evidence in relation to **the existing field gate access to Cobham House Vineyard, located on Gold Street, Cobham**. I have reviewed video footage of a 7.5-tonne lorry (approximately 10 metres in length) attempting to access the entrance.

In my professional assessment:

- **The approach angle from Gold Street is extremely acute and does not permit direct access for a vehicle of this size.**
- To enter the gate, a lorry must either reverse into Batts Lane and then drive forward into the entrance, or pull forward into Batts Lane and reverse back toward the field gate.
- These are not standard or safe manoeuvres for public highway conditions, particularly along narrow rural lanes such as Gold Street and Batts Lane, which lack the width, structure, or visibility to safely accommodate such vehicle movements.
- A trained banksman or traffic marshal would be essential to support the driver, manage the manoeuvre, and ensure the safety of other road users.

In addition to the difficulties with entry, exiting the site also poses significant safety concerns. The existing access does not appear to provide the required visibility splays or sightlines, making it hazardous for any large vehicle to re-enter Gold Street. Limited sightlines increase the risk of collisions, especially given the restricted width and curvature of the road.

I also wish to highlight concerns about the track surface leading into Cobham House Vineyard:

- The access track appears to be unbound (not surfaced with tarmac or similar material), which will likely deteriorate with regular HGV use.

- Such a surface would quickly degrade, particularly in wet weather, leading to mud, loose aggregate, and surface washout being tracked onto the public road.
- Over time, the adjoining public right of way would also suffer damage, with rutting, erosion, and reduced usability for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians—contrary to its intended use.

In conclusion, the current field gate entrance to Cobham House Vineyard is not suitable for safe or sustainable use by HGVs without substantial modification. The approach angle, limited visibility, lack of turning space, and inadequate surface conditions all present serious risks to highway safety and the integrity of the surrounding environment.

