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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

North Hertfordshire Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

District ref: 24/02814/FP
HCC ref: NH/23615/2025
HCC received: 15 January 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Land At Mill Farm, Charlton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2AB

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Conversion and extension of existing barns to create two dwelling following demolition of shed/outbuildings/silos. Alterations to existing vehicular access

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

The Highway Authority are unable to extend the grant of planning permission for the following reasons:

Plot 1 the position of the access is unsafe.
Plot 2 Visibility splays are required.
Substandard parking spaces (can be conditioned)

COMMENTS

The proposals are for Full Planning Permission: Conversion and extension of existing barns to create two dwelling following demolition of shed/outbuildings/silos. Alterations to existing vehicular access. Charlton Road is maintainable by the highway authority and is unclassified and provides a local access function in the road hierarchy. The vehicle speeds past this site are limited to 30 mph. There have been no recorded accidents near the site in a rolling 5-year period.

Policy Review:

The key documents used to assess the application are:

- Manual for Streets 2007
- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)
- Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Local Transport Plan-4 [2018-2031, May2018]
- Cycle Infrastructure Design DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020)
- HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024)

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has no previous planning history.

DRAWINGS

The Highway Authority note the submission of materials in support of the planning application, including drawing numbers: 22203-PL01A, PL02A, PL03, PL05, PL06, PL12A, & B, PL13A, PL15 and PL16.

ACCESS

Walking / Cycling

Schools, shops, and other amenities are not easily accessible from the site. According to the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) in their "Planning for Walking" guidelines, developments should prioritize pedestrian and cycle movements and ensure access to high-quality public transport facilities wherever practical. For accessibility, a 400-meter walking distance to bus stops is considered a reasonable catchment area, while an 800-meter distance is reasonable for railway stations.

From the proposed points of access to the main section of Charlton Road (approximately 90 meters), there is no footway or street lighting. However, the main part of Charlton Road, which leads into Hitchin, is about a 30-minute walk and is equipped with footways and street lighting.

The site is accessible for leisure walking and cycling. There are several Rights of Way footpaths near the site, including Hitchin Footpaths 041, 042, 032, 038, 092, and 093.

PARKING

Cycle

The requirements for cycle parking for new dwellings: 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020) recommends for cycle parking storage should be 2m (1.8m is acceptable) in length by 0.3m space between cycles. There should be parking for 1 cycle per dwelling. Outside cycle parking should be covered and lockable. The provision of well-located, safe and secure cycle parking for residents and visitors is a key factor in encouraging people to cycle as an alternative to using the private car.

Vehicle

The submitted drawing (Ref-PL12 B) demonstrates that 2 car parking bays will be provided for each dwelling measuring 4.8m x 2.4m. It appears that parking dimensions are substandard in the context

of HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024) which recommends parking bays should 5mx 2.5m.

ACCESS

Proposed Plot 1

Drawing Ref PL12 B illustrates the proposed access and parking arrangements are situated on the apex of the bend. Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan seeks to ensure that access arrangements are safe and suitable for all people, built to an adequate standard, adhere to the county council's Highway Design Standards and reflect the LTP Transport User Hierarchy detailed in Policy 1. The proposals will have the potential to interfere with the free and safe flow of highway users.

Existing Plot 2

Drawing (Ref PL12 B) demonstrates the width of the existing access as approx. 6.5 meters. Which would be adequate for the proposals.

VISIBILITY

A visibility splay of 43 meters in each direction would align with the guidelines in Manual for Streets, Table 7.1, and PMPDG Part 3, Chapter 9, Paragraph 12 for a 30mph speed environment. This requires a set-back of 2.4 meters from the carriageway, although a 2-meter set-back may be considered in lightly trafficked and slow-speed situations (MfS: 7.7.7).

Plot 1

The submitted plans do not demonstrate adequate inter-visibility between drivers exiting the site and other highway users (vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians).

Plot 2

For the existing access serving Plot 2, visibility splays would be necessary due to anticipated changes in traffic nature and volume.

The applicant may wish to review the design or conduct a speed survey to determine the 85th percentile speed limit for both plots, which would be used to assess visibility at current speeds.

Emergency Vehicle Access:

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), paragraph 116(d), development applications should ensure access for emergency vehicles. Guidance is provided in Manual for Streets (MfS) (6.7.2) and HCC's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) (Part 2, Chapter 4). Requirements are detailed in the Building Regulations: Fire Safety Approved Document B, Vol 1, Dwellings, 2010 (as amended). Access for a pumping appliance should be within 45 meters of a single dwelling house and within 45 meters of all points within the dwelling house. Based on the submitted plans, the proposed development may not meet the recommended emergency vehicle access distance from the highway

REFUSE / RECYCLING

The proposals for recycling bin storage must be in line with Manual for Streets MfS 6.8.9 residents should not be required to carry waste more than 30m and be within 25m of the kerbside/bin collection point.

CONCLUSION

The proposals have the potential to interfere with the safe flow of users on the adjacent highway due to the lack of a sufficient level of available vehicle to vehicle visibility (or vehicle to pedestrian visibility) at both access points. The proposals are therefore contrary to policy guidelines as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2018

Signed

Paul Marshall

31 January 2025