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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: 26/00318/FP
HCC ref: NH/28315/2026
HCC received: 24 February 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Senober Khan

Location

Barn To The West Of Lordship Farmhouse, Pirton Road, Holwell, Hertfordshire,

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Conversion of a grade II listed building and associated curtilage listed building to two semi-detached residential dwellings (1 x 3-bed and 1 x 4-bed) including demolition of modern extension and replacement single storey extension. Erection of four detached and semi-detached dwellings (4 x 4 bed); four bay cart shed for covered parking; associated parking and gardens; and minor alteration to existing vehicular access and partial widening of access road following demolition of existing structures

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 proposal does not provide safe and suitable pedestrian access, resulting in unacceptable car dependence and conflict with the NPPF Dec 2024 (amended Feb 2025) requirement to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport and to locate development where it is or can be made sustainable, as well as Hertfordshire's LTP4 and Place & Movement Guidance; planning permission should therefore be refused unless a safe, direct pedestrian link to PRow 6 (or equivalent footway/lighting mitigation) is secured.

Highways comments:

The proposal involves the demolition of some existing structures, and the conversion listed building and the change of use from agriculture by the redevelopment of farm barns to provide a total of six residential properties with associated 16 car parking spaces and cycle parking.

The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement (TS) which the Highway Authority (HA) has reviewed and the following are bullet points of their case:

- Application 22/01843/LBC for converting the Grade II listed building into two dwellings
- HA raised no objection on 9 August 2022.
- Approved on 10 January 2023, creating an extant permission.
- Several conditions have since been discharged.
- 43m visibility splays, as accepted under extant permission 22/01843/LBC
- Bus route 89 serves Holwell with stops 300 m away and offers 6-7 services each way daily between Hitchin and Henlow Camp.
- There are no footways and no dedicated cycle routes in the immediate vicinity of the site.

The conclusion of the TS states:

It is considered the development can be served from a 'safe and suitable' access, and the residual cumulative impacts of the scheme would not be 'severe'.

Although the site benefits from extant permission for two dwellings, the current proposal represents a more intensive residential use. The HA notes that, while the additional four units would not create a severe transport impact, its main concern is the lack of safe, accessible routes for all users, given the absence of footways and street lighting, resulting in total reliance on car travel.

The TS notes bus stops are approx. 300 m away; however, the actual walking distance from the furthest dwelling to the site access and then along the public highway is approx. 450 m, exceeding the 400 m accepted threshold. Nevertheless, this route requires pedestrians to walk on the carriageway due to the absence of footways and street lighting along Waterloo Lane, with provision only beginning approx. 50 m into Pirton Road. This raises safe and suitable access for all users concerns and indicates car dependence, contrary to the NPPF's December 2024 (amended Feb 2025) requirement to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport and to focus development in locations that are or can be made sustainable.

The HA also notes that to the west and north of the site lies Public Right of Way (PRoW) No. 6, which provides an off-road pedestrian link to Pirton Road, where an element of continuous footway provision is available leading directly to the nearest bus stops. To address the HA's concerns regarding the current reliance on walking within the carriageway along Waterloo Lane, the applicant should explore securing a formal, safe and accessible connection to PRoW No. 6. Providing such a link would offer a safer, more direct and policy-compliant pedestrian route to public transport facilities, helping to mitigate issues of pedestrian safety and car dependence highlighted by the HA.

Recommendation:

The proposal does not provide safe and suitable pedestrian access, resulting in unacceptable car dependence and conflict with the NPPF Dec 2024 (amended Feb 2025) requirement to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport and to locate development where it is or can be made sustainable, as well as Hertfordshire's LTP4 and Place & Movement Guidance; planning permission should therefore be refused unless a safe, direct pedestrian link to PRoW 6 (or equivalent footway/lighting mitigation) is secured.

Signed

Senober Khan

18 March 2026