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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: 25/02885/OP
HCC ref: NH/27315/2025
HCC received: 26 November 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Shamsul Huda

Location

Land At Mill Lane, London Road, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, SG4 7NN

Application type

Outline

Proposal

Outline Application : Erection of up to 41 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space (all matters reserved except means of 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:

There is insufficient information provided with this application to enable the Highway Authority to reach a recommendation. In the absence of the necessary details, the Highway Authority recommends refusal due to concerns over potential implications for highway safety and convenience.

The proposed access arrangement, as indicated on drawing (Ref: 70056409-SK-006, Rev P03), is not acceptable for the following reasons:

1. Redesign of Approved Access without supporting Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit (RSA).
2. Lack of details on Mill Lane junction stopping-up measures.
3. No swept path analysis for Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV) and emergency vehicles.
4. No Stage 1/2 RSA for access arrangement and Mill Lane realignment.
5. Potential right-turn conflict into Mill Lane.
6. No information on future road adoption and maintenance.
7. Inadequate provision and connectivity of cycle routes and footways

COMMENTS:

The Highway Authority acknowledges that this is an outline application where the means of access is under consideration only. Following a review of the proposed access arrangements, the Highway Authority considers that access, stopping up, vehicle movement related issues should be addressed at this stage rather than deferred to a later phase of the planning process.

1 Re-design of Approved Access:

The proposed redesign of the pre-approved roundabout associated with Pound Farm raises concerns regarding vehicular conflicts, pedestrian safety, and connectivity.

The proposed footways along London Road should be increased towards north and connected to the future bus stop delivered by Pound Farm Development.

Pedestrian crossings should be located close to the bus stop for safe access.

Dimensions of the pre-approved three-arm roundabout appear significantly altered, creating delivery challenges for highways.

The applicant must redesign this 4-armed roundabout in collaboration with Pound Farm Development's (Ref: 21/00434/HYA) designers and in accordance with HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG), Part 3, Chapter 9. Provision of tactile crossings on the new road connecting Mill Lane is also required.

It is important to note that the pre-approved three-armed roundabout associated with the Pound Farm Development is currently undergoing a design review. The highway authority considers that adopting a joint approach to redesign this roundabout into a four-armed configuration would be more efficient, convenient, and effective. This approach also would be less time consuming and economical.

2 Mill Lane Junction with London Road Stopping -Up

The Transport Statement (Para 4.2.4) indicates stopping up Mill Lane at London Road but fails to provide details on extent, method, and measures.

Provide full details of stopping-up measures, including TRO (Traffic Regulation Order), and address how access for residents and refuse collection will be maintained for dwellings in the east. Consider a modal filter to retain Mill Lane as an active travel link.

3 Swept Path Analysis: No swept path analysis is submitted for Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV) and Emergency Vehicles -like ambulance & fire service. The applicant is advised to submit swept path analysis for all movements, considering standing car at all junctions for a 12.2m long RCV

The dimensions and layout of a junction shall cater for the swept path of all vehicles likely to be encountered, which will include those used for emergency services and refuse collection

4 Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit: A Stage 1/2 RSA is required to assess safety of:

New access arrangement

Mill Lane realignment

Vehicle movements

The applicant must conduct RSA in accordance with GG 119 (DMRB)

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5 Right Turn to Mill Lane: It has been observed that the proposed layout may result in a potential conflict between vehicles making a right turn into Mill Lane and incoming traffic on the main access road. This raises significant safety concerns, particularly during peak traffic periods, and could lead to increased risk of collisions

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The applicant is strongly advised to review this junction arrangement and consider appropriate mitigation measures to address the identified conflict. In addition, the applicant should support the revised design with a Road Safety Audit (RSA) in accordance with GG 119 (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) to ensure that all safety implications have been thoroughly assessed and addressed.

6 HIGHWAY ADOPTION:

The proposed alignment of Mill Lane, as shown on drawing (Ref: 70056409-SK-006, Rev P03) indicates that the diverted section of the road would pass through the application site, which is currently private land. It is noted that the applicant has not addressed the provision for the future maintenance of this diverted road.

The applicant has advised that it is no longer common practice for the County Council, as Highway Authority, to enter into agreements under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 to adopt all estate roads as highways maintainable at public expense, particularly where such roads provide no wider public benefit. This position is acknowledged; however, in this instance, Mill Lane will become a no-through route for vehicular movements only, and its future status must be clarified.

To ensure long-term maintenance and public accessibility, the applicant must offer to dedicate the land required for the diverted Mill Lane for Highway adoption under s38. This will provide certainty regarding its future management and prevent potential issues relating to access and upkeep. Failure to secure appropriate arrangements for adoption or maintenance would render the proposal contrary to best practice and could result in significant operational and legal complications post-development.

7 Provision of Cycle route/ Footways:

A provision for a cycleway has been indicated on the northern side of the proposed new access road. While this is a positive step towards promoting sustainable travel, it is noted that the proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities do not appear to integrate with the wider active travel network. This lack of connectivity significantly limits the effectiveness of the provision and does not fully support the principles of sustainable transport.

In accordance with Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 and Hertfordshire County Council's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG), March 2024, developments should provide safe, direct, and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists that connect to existing infrastructure and key destinations. This includes ensuring continuity of routes beyond the site boundary to encourage active travel and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

The applicant is therefore strongly advised to review and revise the proposed layout to incorporate well-connected footways and cycleways to and from the development site. These connections should link to the wider active travel network and comply with the design standards set out in the above guidance documents. Failure to address these issues may result in the development being considered contrary to national and local policy objectives for sustainable transport.

Summary

The proposed site access arrangement and Mill Lane diversion, as shown on drawing (Ref: 70056409-SK-006, Rev P03), raise several significant highway safety concerns that need to be addressed immediately rather than at a later stage.

Therefore, the highway authority considers the current access and access road design to be substandard and contrary to paragraph 115 of the NPPF (December 2024) and is recommending refusal of the development in its present form.

The highway authority strongly advises the applicant to redesign the access arrangement in collaboration with the Pound Farm Development. However, I am willing to reconsider the application if the above-mentioned issues are resolved satisfactorily or have a meeting to discuss it further

Signed

Shamsul Huda

17 December 2025