



Mark Youngman
Development Management Group Manager
Hertfordshire County Council
Postal Point CHN115
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
SG1 2ST

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: 24/02343/FP
HCC ref: NH/23042/2024
HCC received: 28 January 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Shamsul Huda

Location

Church Wood, Three Houses Lane, Codicote, Hertfordshire, SG4 8TB

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

AMENDED PROPOSAL

Full Planning Permission : Change of use of existing site from agricultural to use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution). Extensions and alterations to existing barns; erection of detached temporary structure of three years and supporting substation and concrete base. Installation of hardstanding for outside storage and parking and installation of electric front entrance gates. (Development has commenced).

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:

COMMENTS:

The proposals are for a retrospective Full Planning Permission to change of use of existing three barns to office and storage space and the erection of supporting substation and concrete base. Three Houses Lane is maintainable by the highway authority and is unnumbered classified road type-C and provides a local access function in the road hierarchy. The vehicle speeds past this site are limited to 60 mph. This road falls into P1/M1 category in accordance with the HCC's Place & Movement and planning Design Guidance (P&MPDG). A similar application (Ref- 24/1002/FP) was recommended for refusal due to highway safety reasons.

I appreciate that this time, the applicant submitted few additional documents such as Transport Statement and visibility splays.

The HCC as the Highway Authority have reviewed the supporting documents and drawings and wishes to raise an objection to the application. This is due to highway safety and sustainability concerns as the proposals are contrary to the design standards contained in HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024) and LTP 4. Therefore, the highway authority is recommended the proposed development for the following reasons:

- 1.No sweep path analysis is provided for LGV/HGV/OGV
- 2.The access road to the site is substandard in terms of its width (4m)
- 3.Three Houses lane is unsuitable to accommodate the anticipated HGV/LGVs.

Overall, the application lacks sufficient information to correctly assess the highway matters for the site to ensure that it meets standards and is acceptable and safe. This therefore means that it has the potential to conflict with policies stipulated in Hertfordshire County Councils Local Transport Plan (Policy 5) (adopted 2018) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Policy 116).

Three House Lane is substandard to accommodate HGVs:

Three Houses Lane is connecting two major roads (Hitchin Road and Codicote Road) and it is very narrow. The carriageway width does not allow the passing of two vehicles unless an area is found to pull over. However, there are very few of these areas, if any, depending on the weather conditions, especially as local flooding occurs in places along Three House Lane. On a site visit it was observed vehicles reversing to find an acceptable passing place.

Three Houses Lane is completely unsuitable and unsafe for HGVs. There is evidence of an HGV unable to manoeuvre from the access running over the carriageway edge and damaging the front bumper of the vehicle. Any vehicle, especially HGVs, would not be able to pass another vehicle. Currently vehicles must somehow find an area to pull over, and or reverse to a suitable place to allow passing.

Swept Path Analysis:

The applicant needs to provide a routing of HGVs and supported by swept path analysis to justify that HGVs would be able to use Three House Lane without having impact to free flow of traffic along this road. Also, adequate turning facility must be provided with the application site so that all vehicles should be able to exit the site in forward gears.

Vehicular Access:

There is an existing access off Three Houses Lane. In wet weather flooding occurs with standing water and deep muddy ruts totally obscuring the carriageway edge on almost the whole length of the road. On a site visit conditions were such that pulling over to let another vehicle pass was treacherous and dangerous. It has been evidenced that the highway verges are significantly damaged due to unauthorised vehicle movements. The access road to the site should have a minimum width of 5.5m

Sustainable Access:

Navigating Three Houses Lane by foot or cycling during any time of the year especially evenings, winter months, or adverse weather fronts is unsafe. There are no nearby bus stops within acceptable safe walking distances. The nearest bus stop onto Park Lane is 1.4k away from the application which goes totally against all current sustainable and accessibility policies. Key references include paragraphs 115 - 117 of the NPPF, and our LTP4 policy 1.

Conclusion:

Taking all into account, it is likely the site will further expand and increase the amount of HGVs movements. The Highway Authority would oppose this development due to the access to the site being unsafe and unsustainable and the nature of Three Houses Lane which is not suitable for HGV's. The Highway Authority would resist the grant of planning permission for this application.

Signed

Shamsul Huda

19 February 2025