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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: 25/02883/FP
HCC ref: NH/27296/2025
HCC received: 25 November 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Woodcotes, Fears Green, Sandon, Buntingford, SG9 0QZ

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Erection of three residential dwellings and associated works following demolition of no.3 redundant agricultural buildings, demolition of existing cartlodge and partial demolition of existing garage/outbuilding

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 reviewed a similar proposal in 2024. As there is no material change to the proposals in context of sustainability and safety the Highway Authorities' comments remain the same

The application seeks Prior Approval under Class Q for the conversion of a former poultry building into three residential units, including associated works. The site is located on Fears Green (also known as Gannock Road), which is an unclassified road maintained by the highway authority and primarily serves local access. The posted speed limit is 60 mph, and there have been no recorded collisions in the vicinity within the last five years.

Policy Context

Assessment has been undertaken with reference to:

- Manual for Streets (2007)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 (2018–2031)
- Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20, 2020)
- Hertfordshire County Council Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (2024)

Observations

While the proposed development is unlikely to materially affect the operation of the highway network, the location raises significant concerns regarding accessibility and sustainability:

- **No pedestrian infrastructure:** There are no footways along Fears Green, and the applicant cannot provide them within the site frontage. This results in pedestrians having to walk along an unlit carriageway with a 60mph speed limit, which is unsafe and contrary to policy objectives for vulnerable road users.
- **Lack of sustainable transport options:** The site is not served by public transport and offers no realistic walking or cycling connections to local services. Occupants would therefore be heavily dependent on private vehicles for most journeys.
- **Policy conflict:** National and local guidance promotes developments in locations where active travel and public transport are viable. This proposal does not meet those principles and fails to provide safe and suitable access for all users.

Implications

Permitting this scheme would:

- Encourage car dependency and unsustainable travel patterns.
- Create hazardous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly during hours of darkness or adverse weather.
- Set an undesirable precedent for similar isolated conversions.

Conclusion

The application does not demonstrate compliance with Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 policies 5 and 6 or the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for safe, inclusive, and sustainable access. Without substantial improvements to connectivity and pedestrian safety, the Highway Authority cannot support the proposal.

Signed

Paul Marshall

3 December 2025