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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: 25/01237/FP
HCC ref: NH/25281/2025
HCC received: 5 June 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Senober Khan

Location

Site Of Former N And P Windows, Bury Mead Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Change of use to a mixed-use car sales premises (Sui Generis) with open air storage for the display of vehicles for sale, erection of ancillary office/workshop building.

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 does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

Before development commences, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, details of a secure cycle store shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle store shall thereafter be retained, maintained and kept available for the users of the development.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Prior to the occupation/use of the development hereby permitted, the details of the siting, type and specification of EVCPs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All EVCPs shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of each of the units and permanently maintained and retained.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Before development commences, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, details of waste storage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The waste storage shall thereafter be retained and maintained.

HIGHWAY INFORMATIVE:

HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Note (AN) to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980.

Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> telephoning 0300 1234047.

Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Brief description in support of the proposed development by the applicant:

This Planning, Design and Access Statement (D&A) is submitted in support of a full planning application for the change of use and redevelopment of the Former N and P Windows site.

The proposed scheme seeks permission for the use of the site as a car sales premises (Sui Generis), with open-air display and storage of vehicles, the erection of a new ancillary office/workshop building for administrative and operational purposes. The proposal seeks to bring the vacant site back into viable commercial use.

Proposed Development

The application seeks planning permission for the following:

- Change of use of the vacant commercial site to a car sales premises (Sui Generis)
- Open-air display and storage of vehicles for sale
- Erection of one ancillary office/workshop building, to accommodate:
 - o Sales office and reception
 - o Staff WC and kitchen facilities
 - o Workshop area for internal vehicle servicing (only for vehicles owned by the business; not for public repairs or MOTs)
- Sales office and reception
- Staff WC and kitchen facilities
- Workshop area for internal vehicle servicing (only for vehicles owned by the business; not for public repairs or MOTs)

The proposed hours of operation are:

- Monday to Friday: 09:30 – 18:30
- Saturday: 09:30 – 18:00
- Sundays: 10:00 – 16:00

The applicant is willing to revise these hours if required.

The site previously benefitted from planning permission (ref: 20/02481/FP) for the erection of a B2/B8 industrial unit. This permission was not implemented, and the site is currently vacant.

Highways and Parking

The site benefits from an existing access point from Bury Mead Road, which has previously been deemed acceptable by Hertfordshire County Council Highways in earlier planning applications. No changes to the access arrangements are proposed.

The proposed site layout includes:

- 6 designated staff parking spaces
- 5 designated visitor parking spaces, including 1 disabled bay measuring 3.6m x 6m, which complies with relevant accessibility standards
- 52 marked spaces for display/storage of vehicles for sale

While the exact number of sale vehicles will fluctuate, the layout ensures more than sufficient operational capacity. In addition, the hardstanding offers flexibility with ample overflow parking space available within the secure site boundary, if required.

The internal layout enables vehicles to safely turn and manoeuvre on site. Servicing and deliveries can take place entirely within the site envelope, avoiding disruption to Bury Mead Road.

Cycle parking/storage facilities can be secured by planning condition and provided near the office/workshop entrance.

To clarify, no car washing facilities will be provided on site. When required, vehicles will be transported to local off-site car washing businesses. This avoids any drainage or pollution concerns that might arise from on-site washing operations.

- The existing access is retained and has previously been deemed suitable by HCC Highways (ref: 20/02481/FP)
- Hardstanding allows for safe vehicle manoeuvring, turning and parking
- There is ample space for car display, customer parking and service movements

While the proposed layout does not currently show a detailed waste storage area, the applicant confirms they are happy for this to be secured by condition, as was accepted in the previously approved application on the same site (ref: 20/02481/FP).

Highways comments:

The proposal involves the change of use to a mixed-use car sales premises (Sui Generis) with open air storage for the display of vehicles for sale, erection of ancillary office/workshop building with 11 car parking spaces consisting of 5 spaces for visitors and 6 for staff, however no secure and sheltered cycle parking provision for the 6 no.staff and visitors is proposed.

The proposed car parking provision is the responsibility of the LPA to determine the level and suitability of the car parking proposals; however, it is essential that it is operated in efficient and safe manner to minimise the impact on the local highway network which is the responsibility of the HCC HA.

In view of the information provided for the sui generis use the proposal is not expected to have any significant traffic impact on the operation or safety of the highway network.

The applicant has suggested that cycle parking and waste storage and details can be secured by planning conditions.

No details of electric vehicle charging provisions has been provided. Hertfordshire County Council issued a climate emergency in 2019 and the HCC Local Transport Plan Policy 5 requires all new developments/dwellings to provide EV charging points and infrastructure. The HA believes that there is sufficient scope for the applicant to satisfactorily address the above comments and could be conditioned.

Recommendation:

No objection subject to the following condition:

Signed

Senober Khan

25 June 2025