

Pirton Parish Council



Parish Clerk:

Mr Edward Roberts

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Mr Thomas Howe
Planning and Conservation
NHDC
Letchworth Garden City

11 April 2025

Dear Mr Howe,

RE: West Lane Farm, Pirton 25/00461/FP

Thank you for consulting the Pirton Parish Council on this application.

We are again faced with a planning application on what has proved to be a controversial site.

In 2019, the Applicants applied for the current access which was granted despite objections from villagers and the Parish Council. Presumably, it was considered adequate by the Applicants for any residents of the barn(s) and agricultural use. The Planning Statement submitted by the Applicants said in its conclusions;

"Full planning permission is sought for a new access at West Lane Farm, Pirton, Hertfordshire. West Lane Farm comprises 44ha of arable farmland, general purpose agricultural buildings and 2 grain stores.

There is no current access to the farmland or buildings on the applicants land.

Full planning permission is sought for a new access located on land within the applicants control. This will allow the applicant to run the business sustainably without restriction.

The track is of sufficient width to safely accommodate pedestrians and cyclists whilst allowing farm traffic to pass. (*Italics added*)."

Concerns were raised at the time that it was unnecessarily wide and obtrusive and was more aimed at future development requirements, including the 2018 application to convert two of the barns. We must query why it is no longer suitable for farm and development purposes.

In that context, West Lane Farm is no longer a true working farm . All its barns have been converted or have permission to be converted into non-agricultural use. The remaining arable land is, to the best of our knowledge, let on a "contract farmer" basis. Agricultural traffic is, as a result, light and does not pose a significant problem as currently used..

HCC Highways have commented as follows;

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Parish Councillors:  
Miss J Rogers (Chairman),  
Mrs D Burleigh, Mrs A Goodman, Mr S Maple, Mrs M Parkin, Mr N Rowe, Ms N Topliff

**"In principle the access would be approved as there is a betterment in terms of safety. However, for the application to be approved the existing access would need to be closed, otherwise adding a second access would introduce another area of conflict with farm vehicles and road users. A plan showing the closed access should be provided."**

We wholeheartedly agree that the existing 2019 access should be closed were this to be granted. We presume Highways were referring to this rather than any other track. The Applicants do not make clear whether this is the case.

If it were not, then we fear that this has more to do with separating any remaining agricultural traffic from the new development(s) and less to do with safety. In effect, whilst the 2019 application was presumably approved on the basis that it was required to bear mixed traffic (hence the width) and to maintain the agricultural business then if it were to remain, it would be more of a grand entrance to a multi-million pound development **with the purpose of removing agricultural traffic.**

We object to this proposal, if this was the case. A second entrance would again impact the surrounding countryside and possibly biodiversity and might be used for further development. The current entrance applied for in 2019 envisaged mixed residential and farm traffic and should be used as such.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Rogers,  
Chairman, Pirton Parish Council