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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: 25/02115/FP
HCC ref: NH/27477/2025
HCC received: 10 December 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Kirby Manor Farm, Northfield Road, Ashwell, Baldock, SG7 5JQ

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Conversion of 3 existing agricultural buildings to provide 8 residential units, including gardens and formation of vehicular 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:

Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority has reviewed the supporting documents and drawings and wishes to raise an objection to the application. This is due to sustainability and highway safety concerns, as the proposals are contrary to the design standards contained in HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (March 2024), Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Manual for Streets.

Comments

Application Summary

The Highway Authority has commented previously on similar applications. These proposals seek Full Planning Permission for the conversion of three existing agricultural buildings to provide eight residential units, including gardens and formation of vehicular access.

Surrounding Area

The site is located in an isolated rural position served by a narrow, unlit lane with no pedestrian footways, cycle routes, or public transport connections. The location is wholly unsuitable for walking, cycling, or any form of active travel.

Policy Review

The key documents used to assess the application are:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
- Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007)
- Hertfordshire County Council's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (March 2024)

Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 (2018–2031)

Reasons for Refusal

1. Unsustainable Location – Active Travel Impossible

The site offers no realistic opportunity for walking, cycling, or public transport. This is contrary to: NPPF Paragraph 110(a) & (b): Development should provide safe and suitable access for all users and pursue opportunities for sustainable transport modes. NPPF Paragraph 112: Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. The proposal fails these requirements.

2. Conflict with HCC Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (2024)

Principle 1: Prioritise active travel and integrate movement networks.

Policy 5(g): Resist development that severely affects safety on rural roads or compromises routes important for sustainable transport. The proposal does not provide any active travel infrastructure or connectivity.

3. Contrary to Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)

Policy 1: Reduce car dependency and promote sustainable travel choices.

The development would generate significant car-based trips and fails to support carbon reduction or health objectives.

4. Failure to Apply Manual for Streets Principles

Manual for Streets advocates layouts that encourage walking and cycling through connected street networks and safe, attractive routes. The proposal offers only vehicular access via a rural lane, with no provision for active travel.

5. Detailed NPPF Requirements Not Met

The NPPF requires developments to:

Prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements within the site and with neighbouring areas (Para 110a).

Provide access to high-quality public transport (Para 110b).

Create places that are safe, secure, and attractive for all users (Para 110c).

Focus significant development in sustainable locations (Para 112).

This proposal does none of these.

Conclusion

The proposal is contrary to:

- NPPF Paragraphs 110 & 112
- Manual for Streets
- HCC Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (2024)
- Hertfordshire LTP4 Policy 1

It would result in an unsustainable pattern of development with no realistic provision for active travel or public transport. The Highway Authority therefore recommends refusal.

Signed

Paul Marshall

12 December 2025