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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: 24/02214/FP  
HCC ref: NH/22708/2024  
HCC received: 22 October 2024  
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi  
Case officer: Paul Marshall

### **Location**

Land On The North West Side Of, Green Lane, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, SG7 5LW

### **Application type**

Full Application

### **Proposal**

Full Planning Permission : Erection of two 2-bed dwellings, three 3-bed dwelling and two four-bed dwellings, with associated access, landscaping and parking

### **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 Condition 1 and informatives 1-3.

## **COMMENTS**

The proposals are for Full Planning Permission: Erection of two 2-bed dwellings, three 3-bed dwelling and two four-bed dwellings, with associated access, landscaping and parking. The site is Green Lane and is located in a rural area. The Highway Authority are limited in the extent to which it is able to comment, noting that Green Lane is a privately maintained road and does not have public rights of way, therefore it is beyond the authority of the Highway Authority who are responsible for all roads / footways / verges etc. that are considered maintainable at public expense (the public highway).

Policy Review:

The key documents used to assess the application are:

- Manual for Streets 2007
- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)
- Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Local Transport Plan-4 [2018-2031, May2018]
- Cycle Infrastructure Design DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020)
- HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024)

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

The application site has a long and varied planning history.

## **DRAWINGS**

The Highway Authority note the submission of materials in support of the planning application, including drawing numbers: 24/02214/FP, GLA-P-01 Site Layout, Transport Statement - Parts 1 to 3, Planning Statement, and Covering Statement.

## **SUSTAINABLE ACCESS**

### Walking

The distance from the proposed site is approx. 185 meters from the back edge of Station Road. Section 2.2.3 of the TS states: 'The first 40m of Green Lane is surfaced with road markings and is wide enough for two vehicles to pass. Beyond this Green Lane becomes an informally surfaced/gravelled track which varies in width from between circa 3m to 3.7m, with a grassed verge to each side'.

Accesses in new builds should adhere to current higher standards of accessibility as outlined in both local and national policies, guidance's, and regulations. The planning process seeks/provides the opportunity to improve safety and conditions by applying current higher standards of design, build and safety to new developments, and not to retain and/or continue with past obsolete standards. The distance between the back edge of the surfaced area and the first pedestrian refuge (pedestrian access point to the site) is approx. 70 meters. This distance then becomes an unlit shared surface and does not account for the needs of those with small children, pushchairs and those with reduced mobility, including visually impaired people and people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters (Equalities Act).

Shared surfaces are only suitable and acceptable for short length of roads and not for significantly long lengths as being proposed. This then would be refused on an unsafe unsustainable access.

## **PEDESTRIAN REFUGES**

Drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-014 illustrates the footpath into the site as 1.5 meters in width, this should be 2 meters. Where the footpath meets the edge of green lane the width is expanded to the

northern edge by approx. .700 meters giving the entrance width of approx. 2.2 meters. The entrance then becomes the pedestrian refuge area and is protected by a pair of wooden bollards. A second refuge area is shown on the same drawing approx. 17 meters north. The area is approx. 3.2 x 1.5 meters with a bollard at each end. As has been stated, the distance to the first pedestrian refuge is too long and too narrow.

## **CYCLING**

'Cycle Infrastructure Design' DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020) recommends for cycle parking storage should be 2m (1.8m is acceptable) in length by 0.3m space between cycles. There should be parking for 1 cycle per dwelling. Outside cycle parking should be covered and lockable. The provision of well-located, safe and secure cycle parking for residents and visitors is a key factor in encouraging people to cycle as an alternative to using the private car.

Drawing (Ref GLA-P-01) of the Planning Statement section 6.41 states 'Five of the homes (plots 1-5) have garages and cycle storage is provided within the garages.

Drawings Ref GLA-P-06,10, and 14 illustrate Plots 1 to 4 where garages measure 3 x 7 meters. Drawing (Ref GLA-P-18 Plot 5) illustrates the garage measures 3 x 6 meters. Section 6.41 further states 'the cycle store for plot 7 would be within a secure store in the back garden and plot 6 would have secure storage at the northern end of the new access road'.

Plots 1-7 therefore all comply with the above Transport Note recommendations.

## **VEHICLE PARKING**

The proposals are in accordance HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024) The LPA as the parking authority, must determine against its parking standards if the level of parking is acceptable.

## **VEHICLE ACCESS AND VISIBILITY**

### Green Lane with Site Access

Section 6.31 of the Planning Statement states: 'To support the access, 2.4m x 25m visibility splays will be provided which are suitable for 20mph speed'. It is accepted that Green Lane can be said to have a 20mph and therefore a speed survey is not required. See drawing ITL16680-GA-014 Rev E.

## **GATES**

Drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-014 Rev E appears to show gates approx. 4.7 meters from the back edge of Green Lane. HCC recommend this as 6 meters however, in this instance 4.7 meters is adequate.

## **GREEN LANE VEHICLE PASS BY BAYS**

Section 2.6.3 of the Transport Statement states: 'Localised widening at two locations so that larger vehicles (e.g. the weekly refuse vehicle) can pass cars without either needing to reverse back'. These are demonstrated on Drawing ITL16680-GA-014 Rev E. The first bay is 16.5 x 1.5 meters plus tapers. The northern taper ends at the point of the first pedestrian refuge. The second location uses the bell mouth access to the site. This is approx. 20 meters long which includes concrete edging to the northern side of the access. Both passing bays are sufficiently wide

## **SWEPT PATH ANALYSIS**

Drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-011 illustrates a refuse vehicle 12.1 meters in length effectively completing the turns into the site access.

Drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-01 Rev B illustrates an estate vehicle 4.7 meters in length. The standard length of SUV's and saloon or estate vehicles should be 5.079 meters in length as shown on drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-015 Rev B. The applicant needs to provide a swept path with this length of vehicle.

Drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-019 illustrates a fire tender swept path which conforms to the specifications in the Town and Country Planning Act Response Guide.

Drawing Ref ITL16680-GA-016 Rev B illustrates a supermarket delivery vehicle effectively completing the turns into the site access.

## **EMERGENCY ACCESS**

The nature of the site puts the proposals / access within 45 meters from the public highway (As required in accordance with MfS 6.7.2)

## **REFUSE / RECYCLING**

The proposals for recycling bin storage must be in line with Manual for Streets MfS 6.8.9 residents should not be required to carry waste more than 30m and be within 25m of the kerbside/bin collection point.

## **CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

It is important that a CMP is provided considering the nature of the surface of Green Lane and the operation of the junction with High Street. The statement must have or be shown as a drawing of the construction site and the dedicated areas within. These should include but not limited to, construction parking area, wheel washing, and storage area.

## **CONCLUSION**

As has been said, Green Lane is a private access road, which is beyond the authority of the Highway Authority. If the development were accessed by maintainable highway, it would be refused on the grounds of unsustainability and an unsafe access.

All comments (except for the access from Station Road) relating to the site and site access road are suggestions which the LPA may wish to take note of.

## **HIGHWAY MAINTAINABLE ROAD**

### **STATION ROAD ACCESS WITH GREEN LANE**

Station Road Ashwel is maintainable by the highway authority and is an unnumbered classified and provides a local access function in the road hierarchy. The vehicle speeds past this site are limited to 30 mph. There have been no recorded accidents near the site in a rolling 5-year period.

### **CONDITIONS**

**CON1)** Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay shall be provided in full accordance with the details indicated on the approved drawing number (ITL16680-GA-017) The splay shall thereafter be retained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure that the level of visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles is satisfactory in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

### **INFORMAVTIVES**

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.

**AN1)** Extent of highway: Information on obtaining the extent of public highway around the site can be acquired from the County Council's website at:  
[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/extent-of-highways.aspx](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/extent-of-highways.aspx).

**AN2)** 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 County Council website at:  
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

**AN3)** Obstruction of highway: 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 County Council website at:  
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

## **COMMENTS**

### Station Road Junction with Green Lane

Section 5.3 of the Transport Statement illustrates a speed survey was carried out on the junction of Green Lane and Station Road between 15 and 21 June 2024. This demonstrated the 85th percentile at 25.6 mph in both east and west bound directions. It is agreed with section 5.3.2 of the Transport Statement the design speed requires a 2.4m x 34.4m visibility splay in both directions which is achieved. See drawing ITL16680-GA-017.

## **TRIPS**

The application uses TRICS in assessing the likely trip generation. HCC accept the basis upon which survey sets have been selected. In terms of trip generation, the applicant uses the TRICS database 7.10.2 and demonstrates the following:

AM peak departures as 3 vehicle trips.

PM peak arrivals 3 vehicle trips

Section 5.1.3 of the Transport Statement signifies 'On average, the traffic generation of the scheme will be circa one vehicle movement every 20-minutes in the busiest hours of the day. This is a very modest level of additional traffic that will not have a noticeable impact'. The Highway Authority are satisfied the extra trips will likely have little impact on the operation of the junction with High Street and Green Lane

## **CONCLUSION**

Should the LPA be minded to approve the application please note the above condition and informatives relate only to the access from Station Road. This level of development is unlikely to generate any extra movements which would ultimately lead to demonstrable harm to the highway network in terms of free flow and capacity, therefore; the highway authority would not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission from the access (Station Road) into the private access road.

**Signed**

Paul Marshall

20 November 2024