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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: 25/02930/PNMA
HCC ref: NH/27300/2025
HCC received: 25 November 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Maintenance House, 3 - 4 Portmill Lane, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 1DJ

Application type

Prior Approval

Proposal

Prior Approval Class MA - Comm to Resi : Change of use of ground floor office use (Class E) to residential use (Class C3) to provide two self-contained one-bedroom flats

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:

CON1) Prior to the first commencement of the development hereby permitted a plan of cycle parking should be submitted in accordance with (Cycle Infrastructure Design' DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020) and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to first occupation the approved scheme shall be fully implemented and thereafter retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018)

CON2) No development shall commence until a Construction Management Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, including elements of the CLOCS standards as set out in the Highway Authority's Construction Management template.

Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan: The Construction Management Statement shall include details of:

Access arrangements to the site.

Traffic management requirements.

Construction and storage compounds

Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway.

Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times.

Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.

Where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding which must be kept within the site boundary, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

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) 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.

AN2) 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.

AN3) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. 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 and use thereafter are in a condition

such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047

AN4) Street works licence (New Roads and Street Works Act - Section 50): The applicant is advised that they are not authorised to carry out any work within the Public Highway and that to do so they will need to enter into a legal agreement with the Highway Authority (NRSW agreement). This consent is separate and additional to any planning permission that may be given. Before proceeding with the proposed development, the applicant shall obtain the requirements and permission for the associated placement of apparatus within the adjacent highway as part of the proposal via the County Council's website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/permit-scheme/east-of-england-permit-scheme.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234 40047. This should be carried out prior to any new apparatus is placed within the highway.

COMMENTS

Prior Approval Class MA - Comm to Resi: Change of use of ground floor office use (Class E) to residential use (Class C3) to provide two self-contained one-bedroom flats.

Context:

Portmill Lane is an unclassified local access road and provides a local access function in the road hierarchy Portmill Lane is highway maintainable at public expense. A 20mph speed limit applies. On Hertfordshire County Council's Place and Movement network Portmill Lane is classed as P2/M1 (Residential Street). No reportable highway accidents recorded within the immediate vicinity of the application site (5-year rolling). No Public Right of Way (as shown on the Public Rights of Way Map) directly affects the site or would be affected by the proposal. The county council considers Portmill Lane not to be a traffic sensitive road.

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 Guidance (Department for Transport Local Transport Note July 2020)
- HCC's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024)

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has previous planning history with 25/02744/PNMA and 25/02745/PNMA.

DRAWINGS

The Highway Authority note the submission of materials in support of the planning application, including Supporting Statement for Prior Approval Application, Drawings 05 to 07, and 11.

ACCESSIBILITY

Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance

According to the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020), cycle parking should provide a minimum length of 2.0 metres (with 1.8 metres acceptable) and allow 0.3 metres of spacing between cycles. Provision should be made for one cycle space per dwelling.

For external cycle parking, facilities must be covered and lockable. Well-located, safe, and secure cycle parking for both residents and visitors is essential to encourage cycling as a viable alternative to private car use.

Drawing 07 illustrates a proposed cycle parking shelter; however, given the site's town centre location and its potential vulnerability at night, the shelter should be fully enclosed and lockable to ensure security. Please see Condition 1 above.

Planning for Walking Guidance

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) publication Planning for Walking emphasizes that new developments should, wherever practical, be located and designed to prioritize pedestrian and cycle movements, while also ensuring access to high-quality public transport facilities.

In terms of accessibility, a 400-metre walking distance to bus stops is generally considered a reasonable catchment, with 800 metres appropriate for railway stations. It is recognised the rail station is approximately 14 minutes' walk (0.6 miles)

Given these principles, the site represents an ideal location for a town centre development, offering strong potential for sustainable travel choices.

PARKING, ACCESS, and RECYCLING

Section 7. of the Supporting Statement for Prior Approval Application Transport, Access, Refuse and Servicing states:

The existing entrance and circulation arrangements will be retained. Cycle storage and refuse facilities are provided within the existing rear yard, with level access to the highway for collection.

The councils' requirements are for:

90L per flat for dry recycling

80L per flat for paper and card recycling

80L per flat for residual waste storage

20L per flat for food waste

Given the highly sustainable location—close to public transport, shops, and services—no dedicated on-site car parking is proposed. The Highway Authority welcome sustainable car free developments

EMERGENCY ACCESS

Consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), paragraph 116 (d), applications for development should allow for access by emergency vehicles. Guidance is set out in Manual for Streets (MfS) (6.7.2). HCC's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) (Part 2 Chapter 4). Requirements are set out in the Building Regulations: Fire Safety Approved Document B, Vol 1, Dwellings, 2010 (as subsequently amended). Access for a pumping appliance should be provided to within 45m of a single dwelling house (and within 45m of all points within the dwelling house). As far as it can be reasonably ascertained from submitted plans, the proposed development would be within the recommended emergency vehicle access distance from the highway

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT STATEMENT (CMS)

A Construction Management Statement is essential due to the site's proximity to a heavily used car park opposite and the busy pedestrian footway connecting Bancroft to Portmill Lane.

The CMS should include, or be accompanied by, a detailed drawing of the construction site layout, clearly identifying dedicated areas such as:

- Construction parking area
- Wheel washing facilities
- Material storage area
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Please refer to Condition 2 above for compliance requirements.

CONCLUSION

Should the Local Planning Authority (LPA) be minded to approve the application, please ensure that the above conditions and informatives are applied.

This scale of development is unlikely to generate additional vehicle movements that would result in any demonstrable harm to the highway network in terms of free flow or capacity. Therefore, the Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the granting of planning permission.

Signed

Paul Marshall

3 December 2025