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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: 25/02957/FP
HCC ref: NH/27481/2025
HCC received: 10 December 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Annexe At, Mill Corner, 22 Charlton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2AE

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Change of use for existing detached annexe to selfcontained dwelling

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:

The Highway Authority cannot support this application because it fails to demonstrate a satisfactory, policy- and design-led approach to providing safe and inclusive access for all users. This is contrary to Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) Policies 5 and 6, as well as the principles of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024). As a result, the proposals present an unacceptable risk to highway safety for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with reduced mobility.

COMMENTS

The proposals are for Full Planning Permission: Change of use for existing detached annexe to self-contained dwelling. Charlton Road is maintainable by the highway authority and is unclassified 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.

Policy Review:

The key documents used to assess the application are:

- Manual for Streets 2007
- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2024)
- 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 no previous planning history.

DRAWINGS

The Highway Authority note the submission of materials in support of the planning application, including drawing numbers: 20-001-01, 25-1002-01, 25-1003-01, and Heritage, Planning, Design & Access Statement (HPDA).

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ACCESS

Walking / Cycling

Schools, shops, and other amenities are not easily accessible from the site. According to the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) in their "Planning for Walking" guidelines, developments should prioritize pedestrian and cycle movements and ensure access to high-quality public transport facilities wherever practical. For accessibility, a 400-meter walking distance to bus stops is considered a reasonable catchment area, while an 800-meter distance is reasonable for railway stations.

From the point of access to the main section of Charlton Road (approximately 90 meters), there is no footway or street lighting. However, the main part of Charlton Road, which leads into Hitchin, is about a 30-minute walk and is equipped with footways and street lighting.

The site is accessible for leisure walking and cycling. There are several Rights of Way footpaths near the site, including Hitchin Footpaths 041, 042, 032, 038, 092, and 093.

PARKING

Cycle

The requirements for cycle parking for new dwellings: '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.

ACCESS

The HPDA) under the heading ACCESS AND PARKING states:

The annexe has the benefit of two separate points of direct access to the main highway, both of which have adequate site lines in both directions.

The Highway Authority would not accept 'adequate site lines' as demonstration of the existing visibility splays. This would need to be provided in accordance with the principles found in Hertfordshire's Place & Movement Planning Design Guide Part 4 Chapter 6 section 18.1, page 70.

PARKING

The submitted drawing Ref 20-1001-01 illustrates two proposed parking spaces end to end.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS:

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), paragraph 116(d), development applications should ensure access for emergency vehicles. Guidance is provided in Manual for Streets (MfS) (6.7.2) and HCC's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) (Part 2, Chapter 4). Requirements are detailed in the Building Regulations: Fire Safety Approved Document B, Vol 1, Dwellings, 2010 (as amended). Access for a pumping appliance should be within 45 meters of a single dwelling house and within 45 meters of all points within the dwelling house. Based on the submitted plans, the proposed development may not meet the recommended emergency vehicle access distance from the highway.

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.

CONCLUSION

It is worth noting current sustainability and safe access for all policies are used by the Highway Authority. Current standards are used to assess each application with the emphasis on safe and sustainable travel.

Key Principles for Development Sites (NPPF 2024)

When assessing sites or applications for development:

- Prioritise sustainable transport based on the site's vision, type, and location.
- Ensure safe and suitable access for all users.

Development Applications Should:

1. Prioritise walking and cycling within the site and to neighbouring areas, then facilitate access to high-quality public transport with layouts that maximise coverage and include facilities to encourage use.
2. Address accessibility needs for people with disabilities and reduced mobility across all transport modes.
3. Create safe, secure, and attractive places that:
4. Minimise conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.
5. Avoid unnecessary street clutter.
6. Reflect local character and design standards.
7. Allow efficient delivery of goods and access for service and emergency vehicles.

Sustainability / Travel Concerns

1. The proposals fail to support sustainable travel options, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (Policies 1 and 5a, 5b, 5g).
2. The proposals do not provide safe and suitable pedestrian access, limiting opportunities for sustainable travel.

The proposals do not provide safe and suitable pedestrian access, limiting opportunities for sustainable travel. This is a fundamentally unsustainable location. The probability that residents of the new dwelling would use the bus service to access shops and other services is frankly unlikely. For the reasons stated above the Highway Authority are unable to extend the grant of planning permission

Signed

Paul Marshall

18 December 2025