

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Rea.....

**APPLICATION
REFERENCE**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
DEVELOPMENT**

APPLICATION SITE

25/01198/FP

Extension of existing hardstanding
(Development already carried out).
Installation of permeable driveway
(Development has commenced).
Creation of vehicular access off West
Lane.

Land To The East Of 2
West Lane
Pirton
Hertfordshire
SG5 3RA

Submitted Plan Nos

25.072-P1 25.075-P2

1.0 Policies

1.0 Relevant planning policies:

1.1 North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031

Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt
Policy SP9: Design & Sustainability
Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
Policy SP13: Historic environment
Policy CGB1: Rural areas beyond the Green Belt
Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters
Policy D1: Sustainable design
Policy D3: Protecting living conditions
Policy NE2: Landscape
Policy NE4: Biodiversity
Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets

1.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Relevant throughout but particular reference to
Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places)
Section 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)
Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)

1.3 Pirton Neighbourhood Plan

Policy PNP2: Design and character
Policy PNP4: Hedgerows, Trees & Verges
Policy PNP5: Wildlife
Policy PNP7: Key views and vistas
Policy PNP8: Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage
Policy PNP 11: Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists and Motorists

2.0 Site History

78/01492/1: Outline application for erection of detached house and double garage and formation of new vehicular access. Refused 30/11/1978. Appeal dismissed 1979

92/00882/1: Detached dwelling with single garage. Refused. Appeal dismissed 27/05/1993

94/00775/1: Two bed detached dwelling with new vehicular access, Refused 6/10/1994

94/01353/1: Two bed detached dwelling with new vehicular access. Refused 19/07/1995

95/01050/1EUD: Certificate of Lawful Development for the retention and continued use of a mobile home on the site. Granted 21/11/1995

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Pirton Parish Council:**

Raise an objection on several grounds (full details on the Council's web site):

- ☐ Should be an enforcement matter
- ☐ Adverse impact on the character of the conservation area
- ☐ Dangerous to highway safety
- ☐ Loss of highway verge
- ☐ Loss of biodiversity
- ☐ Unauthorised caravan on site

3.2 **Hertfordshire Highways:**

Recommend refusal over concerns in respect of highway safety and convenience.

3.3 **Site Notice / Neighbour notification**

The Council has received 18 letter raising objections from neighbours and local residents (full detail on web site). Comments include the following:

- ☐ Unauthorised development on agricultural land outside of village boundary.
- ☐ All unauthorised infrastructure / services should be removed
- ☐ Unlawful vehicular access
- ☐ Intention to establish residential use through provision of services etc
- ☐ Disregard for planning process
- ☐ Restoration and enforcement required
- ☐ Material change of use
- ☐ Adverse impact on highway safety

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site consists of a rectangular shaped site of some 1209 sq metres located on the north side of West Lane and sited between two residential properties at No 2 West Lane to the west and No. 1 Holwell Road to the east. A track leading to an agricultural field to the north runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Extension of existing hardstanding (Development already carried out). Installation of permeable driveway (Development has commenced). Creation of vehicular access off West Lane.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 Planning Policy

- 4.3.2 The application site is located outside of the village boundary and in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. Policy CGB1 ('Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt') sets out the broad typologies of development that would be considered acceptable in the RABGB. The developments on site do not fall within any of these categories and therefore the application is contrary to Policy CGB1 of the North Herts Local Plan

4.3.3 Impact on character and appearance

- 4.3.4 The developments the subject of this application involve the provision of hardstanding across an extensive area of the site, removal of soft landscaping including hedgerow, provision of timber boundary fencing and a vehicular access onto West Lane. Cumulatively this development erodes the landscaped character of the site and introduces a markedly urbanising impact. The development has had the effect of opening up public views into the site from the adjacent carriageway and public footpath. As a consequence the development is considered to not respond positively to the site's local context at this rural location beyond the village boundary. The development has a harmful visual impact on the landscape character of the site and the natural beauty of the countryside contrary to Local Plan Policies SP9 and D1.

4.3.5 Impact on heritage assets

- 4.3.6 The application site is located adjacent to the Pirton Conservation Area on two sides – the eastern and southern boundaries. The application is not accompanied by a heritage assessment of the impact of the development on the setting of the Pirton Conservation Area. The development introduces a markedly urbanising effect on the historic character and appearance of the area without adequate justification. As such the development is considered to be harmful to the historic character and setting of the Pirton Conservation Area contrary to the provisions of Policy HE1 of the North Herts Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

4.3.7 Impact on highway safety

- 4.3.8 West lane is a classified road (C22/50) as is Royal Oak Lane opposite the site (C132/20). The application introduces an new vehicular access onto West Lane in close proximity to the West Lane/ Holwell Road/Royal Oak Lane junction. The Highway Authority considers that in the absence of any detailed information regarding turning area within the site, the development will have an adverse impact on highway safety and amenity. As such the development would be contrary to the provisions of Policy T1 of the Local Plan which requires new development not to lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts on the highway network.

4.3.9 Impact on neighbouring properties

- 4.3.10 Policy D3 of the Local Plan requires all new development not to cause harm to living conditions. It is not considered that the developments that have been carried out will have any direct impact on existing residents amenity.

4.3.11 Climate change and Biodiversity

- 4.3.12 The submitted Ecology Note by Logika Group (28th April 2025) assesses the biodiversity value of the site through a desk based assessment and concludes the following:

'Under current proposals the Site results in the loss of 0.16 habitat units and 0.02 hedgerow units, resulting in a -61.54% loss for habitat units and -5.56% loss for hedgerow units. To achieve 10% BNG the project will be required to deliver 0.37 habitat units and 0.11 hedgerow units. Details on how this will be delivered will be subject to a suitably worded planning condition'

- 4.3.13 The site has been cleared of a significant amount of vegetation and a large amount of shingle driveway and hardstanding provided. The development does not indicate any new planting at this stage. On the face of it the development fails to achieve a net gain for biodiversity contrary to the provisions of Policy NE4 of the North Herts Local Plan.
- 4.3.14 The development is small scale and will not have any significant effect on local climate change.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The development is unacceptable in planning and highway terms.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The application site is located beyond the designated Pirton village boundary in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt in the adopted North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (NHLP). The development the subject of this application does not meet any of the acceptable forms of development and criteria set out in Policy CGB1 of the Local Plan. As such the development is considered to result in harm to the openness and visual character and amenity of the countryside contrary to Policy CGB1 of the NHLP
2. The development the subject of this application, by reason of the amount of hardsurfacing, boundary treatment and vehicular access proposed, would collectively result in an urbanising effect on the locality harmful to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the provisions of Policy SP9 and Policy D1 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031.
3. The application site is located adjacent to the Pirton Conservation Area. The application is not accompanied by a heritage assessment of the impact of the development on the setting of the Pirton Conservation Area. The development introduces a markedly urbanising effect on the historic character and appearance of

the area without adequate justification. As such the development is considered to be harmful to the historic character and setting of the Pirton Conservation Area contrary to the provisions of Policy HE1 of the North Herts Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

4. The development site is located on a classified road opposite a busy junction with Royal Oak Lane and Holwell Road. The Highway Authority consider that the development is likely to lead to conditions prejudicial to highway safety and amenity. As such the development is considered to be contrary to the provisions of Policy T1 of the North Herts Local Plan.
5. The submitted ecology report concludes that the development results in a loss of habitat and hedgerow units with no proposals for mitigation and or replacement. As such the development fails to achieve a net gain for biodiversity contrary to the provisions of Policy NE4 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council has not acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant as in the Council's view the proposal is unacceptable in principle and the fundamental objections cannot be overcome through dialogue. Since no solutions can be found the Council has complied with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Sam Dicocco Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 29 August 2025	

