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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: 24/02814/FP
HCC ref: NH/23615/2025
HCC received: 1 April 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Land At Mill Farm, Charlton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2AB

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

AMENDED PROPOSAL

Full Planning Permission : Conversion and extension of existing barns to create two dwelling following demolition of shed/outbuildings/silos. Alterations to existing 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:

APPLICANTS' RESPONSES TO HIGHWAY AUTHORITY COMMENTS

The comments have not had regard to the fact that both accesses already exist and serve the existing agricultural use and buildings on the site i.e. the proposal entails the use of existing accesses for the proposed use rather than the introduction of new accesses.

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY RESPONSE

Upon review it is agreed both accesses are existing

The access to serve Plot 1 already exists in a position on the apex of the bend on the Lane serving an agricultural shed, which is proposed for demolition. At present this access can be utilised by large agricultural vehicles serving the established agricultural use of the site.

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY RESPONSE

The access as it stands now has been used for agricultural vehicles. It is evident by the condition of the access it has not been in use for some time. Like most agricultural accesses the use is dependant upon the season and the type of activities and vehicles used. A change of use to residential will inevitably generate more frequent and potentially diverse traffic (cars, LGV's, etc.) including more frequent nighttime trips in the winter season than compared to agricultural use. The initial design of an agricultural access may not provide the same level of visibility as residential roads, increasing the risk of conflict with other vehicles.

It is for the applicant to demonstrate how visibility for passenger vehicles and LGV's can be achieved safely. The requirement for a visibility splay is standard practice for all accesses. Simply saying the existing access for residential use will not be detrimental, is not enough.

ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS:

Policy 5 of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) seeks to ensure that access arrangements are safe, suitable for all people and built to an adequate standard and adhere to the county council's Highway Design Standards. The submitted plans do not illustrate pedestrian access facilities.

VISIBILITY:

Place And Movement Planning Design Guide (PMPDG Part 3 Ch9 Para 12)

Achievable levels of inter-visibility between drivers exiting the site and other highway users (vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) are not demonstrated on the submitted plans.

VEHICULAR VISIBILITY

A visibility splay of 43m in each direction would be consistent with Manual for Streets, Table 7.1 and PMPDG Part 3 Ch9 para 12 for a 30mph speed environment (set-back 2.4m from the carriageway, a 2m set-back may be considered in lightly trafficked and slow speed situations, MfS:7.7.7).

CONCLUSION

The Highway Authority has reviewed the existing accesses and noted that while they have been used for agricultural purposes, a change to residential use will increase traffic frequency and diversity. The applicant must demonstrate safe visibility for passenger vehicles and LGVs, as the current design may not meet residential standards. Additionally, the submitted plans lack pedestrian access facilities, which are required by Policy 5 of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan. Achievable levels of inter-visibility between drivers and other highway users are not shown, and a visibility splay of 43m in each direction is recommended for a 30mph speed environment.

The Highway Authority continues to refuse the application until all the matters discussed have been addressed.

Signed

Paul Marshall

25 April 2025