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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: 25/00044/FP
HCC ref: NH/23758/2025
HCC received: 29 January 2025
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

FEN FARM RABLEY HEATH ROAD CODICOTE WELWYN AL6 9UA

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Conversion of existing stables into dwelling following
demolition of outbuildings

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:

COND1): Cycle Parking 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)

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.

AN) 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.

AN) 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

Context: Conversion of existing stables into dwelling following demolition of outbuildings. Rabley Heath Road is an unclassified local access road and is highway maintainable at public expense. A 30mph speed limit applies. HCC's Place and Movement network, Rabley Heath Road is classed as P1/M1 (E.g. Rural Lane). No reportable highway accidents recorded within the immediate vicinity of the application site (5-year rolling). There are a number of easily accessible Public Rights of Way, including Codicote Footpaths 005, 006, 008, 033, and 035) none of these directly affects the site or would be affected by the proposal. The county council considers Rabley Heath Road 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, May 2018]
- 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 previous planning history. 09/01267/1 and 10/00134/1

DRAWINGS

The Highway Authority note the submission of materials in support of the planning application, including drawing numbers: 6095-E01, 6099-E01, 6099-P01 Rev D, and 6099-P01 Rev A.

PARKING

Cycle

'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. Please see Condition 1 above.

Car

The LPA shall be responsible for assessing the proposed development against local parking standards and to satisfy for itself that any level of parking it requires can be achieved within the boundary of the site.

ACCESS

The existing access is suitable for all types of vehicles.

Accessibility:

Rabley Heath Road is typical rural country road with no footpaths or street lighting. The site is not considered to be within convenient walking distance of the nearest train station (Knebworth) which is located approximately 49 minutes' walk on unlit winding country roads, including crossing the A1M. The nearest bus stop is Newtown which is a 16-minute walk and as previously mentioned, the route is a rural country road with no footpath or street lighting. This would likely result in treacherous conditions for any future occupiers navigating the roads by foot or cycling during the evenings, winter months or adverse weather fronts.

Planning for Walking, issued by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) places emphasis on developments being located and designed, where practical, to give priority to pedestrian (and cycle) movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities. In terms of accessibility, 400m walking distance to bus stops is considered to represent a reasonable catchment, further for a railway station (800m).

VISIBILITY

There is an existing large farm access which would provide adequate inter-visibility for vehicles and pedestrians.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE 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.

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

The limited alternative transport options available mean that occupiers of the proposed dwelling would be likely to be highly reliant on one mode of transport, the private car, for a significant majority of their journeys and to serve their daily needs. Consequently, although vehicle movements would only be associated with one dwelling in this instance and may therefore not be particularly significant, the site and appeal of the proposal cannot reasonably be described as sustainable in relation to accessibility considerations.

The Highway Authority's consideration of existing houses and farms near the proposed site is important. With this consideration, the location's unsustainability alone isn't a strong enough reason to refuse the proposals.

Should the LPA be minded to approve the application please note the above condition and informatives. 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.

Signed

Paul Marshall

10 February 2025