

**Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside**

Heather Lai  
Planning and Building Control  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
Council Offices  
Gernon Road  
Letchworth Garden City  
Herts SG6 3JF

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

5<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (by email)

Dear Ms. Lai,

**Application No. 19/01275/OP**  
**Erection of four dwellings and conversion of timber barn to one residential dwelling following demolition of existing farmhouse and associated farm buildings (all matters reserved except access) on Land at Wrights Farm, Shillington Road, Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3QJ**

CPRE Hertfordshire do not object to the bulk of this application. We consider some development on Plots 1,2 and 3 to be acceptable in principle, as they will fall within the settlement boundary. The conversion of the timber barn (Plot 5) is also acceptable. However, we do have concerns regarding Plot 4.

The Design and Access Statement accompanying the application contains no indication of the intended design of the building on this plot, other than it will be a 4-5 bedroom 2 storey dwelling on the footprint of the existing livestock shed. The existing shed is a single story structure with low eaves. The proposed two storey dwelling will have a more imposing presence and impact on the openness of the countryside and the views from the Right of Way, Footpath 012. Consequently it will be in conflict with Policy 6 of the existing North Herts Local Plan and Policy CGB1 of the Submission Local Plan, both of which now carry significant weight.

It is proposed that this Right of Way be diverted, apparently to provide Plot 4 with a rectangular rear garden. We assume that due process will be followed in obtaining approval under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980. The latter requires the land owner to demonstrate that the proposed diversion is no less commodious than the existing, which this proposal does not appear to be. Both also require the public to be consulted before such a diversion can be made. That does not fall within the scope of this planning application.

It is intended that access to Plots 4 and 5 will be along an unmetalled farm track into which a passing place will be introduced. The Council will have to satisfy itself that this is sufficient to serve two large family houses.

Finally the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan, which has now been made, states that it will support residential development provided that it meets the needs of young families, downsizing occupants and lifetime homes, provides a mix of homes and remains affordable for local people. We do not see how a development of 5No. 4-5 bedroom properties meets those criteria.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving