

80, Drovers Way

Pirton

Hitchin

SG5 3EQ

11th September 2026

Naomi Reynard

North Herts Planning Service

Letchworth Garden City SG6 3JF

Dear Ms Reynard

Outline Application: Outline application for the erection of up to 130 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS), and associated works with all matters reserved save for access (additional supporting information received 17th September and 2nd December 2025) Land South East Of Holwell Road and North Off Hambridge Way, Pirton, Herts,

I write in response to the re-consultation of the above application; I remain opposed to the application having set out my objections in earlier correspondence.

My comments will now address the submission of amended plans and documents. I am disappointed that the applicant appears to be reluctant to fully engage with the planning process, evidenced by their letter dated the 14th August.

I would like to deal first with the issue of Community Involvement which most Pirton residents believe to poor or non-existent. The NPPF introduces a new policy, DM1, which makes clear that developers must take onboard community feedback as their plans evolve. This makes consultation with the local community vitally important in the preparation of a planning application. I can find no evidence of local community involvement in the evolution of this application.

The planning service is to be commended on the establishment of a design code which is a key feature of the NPPF. The national policy clearly states that development proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals.

It is not clear to me how the planning authority can meaningfully assess the application for compliance with the design code when there is little or no evidence presented by the applicant.

The revised DAS has an illustrative masterplan with a naive approach to naming streets in terms used in the design code. The applicant seeks to avoid policy compliance by suggesting that validation of that application is sufficient to use parameter plans and that all design activity will be undertaken through reserved matters applications. The applicant however produced a design code compliant statement, with little supporting evidence.

The application is of significant size and quantum given the context of a small rural village; the amended DAS is a minimalist approach inappropriate in the revised policy context.

There is in my view insufficient information on which to assess the conformity of the application to design policy, there are no illustrative examples of landscape, open space planting, streetscape, or built form architecture and materiality.

The Design code states that a development must deliver buildings with a clear sense of character and identity, shaped by rigorous understanding of the site, its landscape setting and the distinctive qualities of the surrounding area. It would be hard to assess the scheme against this statement without a demonstrated commitment to design quality. The Design code states if the development does not demonstrate a rigorous understanding of context, it will not be permitted.

I now wish to address the issue of site access; there is overwhelming opposition to the proposed route into the site. The applicant rejects the proposal to access the site from the northwest corner after a detailed assessment. The sketches in the revised DAS do not constitute a rigorous design process accompanied by an options appraisal.

The local road network around Pirton is challenging, development should provide the opportunity to resolve historic highways issues. The applicant claims the preferred route into the site **might** not pass a safety audit.

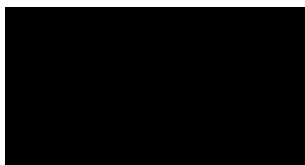
The applicant has alluded to having undertaken design work which would require the use of land in private ownership but has not shared the design as part of consultation process. The response to highways is totally inadequate, the applicant should be asked to fund an independent highways consultancy to produce a scheme from which residents and village would benefit.

My final comment is on the S106 and what appears to be an attempt to question education contributions. As a governor of Pirton Primary school I know how difficult it is to balance school budgets and accommodate growth. To suggest that there are spare places at the primary school is wrong as budget constraints result in mixed age classes, accommodating growth can cause significant disruption for existing pupils.

Whilst not a material consideration I am disappointed that the applicant appears to have no understanding or empathy with a vibrant village with a great sense of community. It appears that land value far out ways the harm that can be caused by an ill-considered planning application.

I and other objectors will continue to monitor the progress of this application to ensure that the process complies with current legislation.

Kind regards



Chris Shellard