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North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

5 Sun Hill
Royston
SG8 9AU

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Dear Mr Glover

Reference: 25/01708/OP Land Opposite Heath Farm Briary Lane Royston Hertfordshire

I write in connection with the above planning application. I know the site well and I have examined the plans of this proposal and the two previous proposals. I object strongly to the development of houses in this sensitive location.

In essence this 2025 proposal is the same as previous proposals in 2018 and 2020 that were refused for a variety of reasons including:

Location – The development site is not identified in the existing Local Plan for North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) - NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031. The application should also be refused for its problematic location, the access is restricted and the topography very steep. Its visual impact will dominate the area.

Highways and Transport - The development site is fundamentally unsustainable due to the location of the site in relation to services. The proposed site access is SMALLER than the previous application now the land registry has corrected the boundaries of neighbouring houses. Also, the constrained nature of the highway network including Echo Hill, Sun Hill, Coronation Avenue and Briary Lane makes access difficult. This conflicts with **paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy T1 of the Local Plan** and local planning guidance of the **Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide**.

The development will be largely reliant on cars – there is no public transport and the hills are very steep for walking or cycling. The access has been proposed with no regard to the existing users of Echo Hill, Sun Hill and Briary Lane.

Echo Hill is a narrow twisty residential road up a steep hill with many parked cars. The refuse lorries need to reverse up Echo Hill since they are unable to turn round at the top. The road becomes slippery in cold weather and residents are unable to drive up the hill. Since the bottom of Sun Hill is one-way, cars and larger vehicles need to pass up Briary Lane, then round a tight and narrow junction into the top of Sun Hill, then another tight, blind and narrow junction into Echo Hill. All these roads are narrow and have lots of parked cars. They are in effect single-track roads. This problem is exacerbated by the use of Briary Lane, Coronation Avenue and Sun Hill as a “rat run” for people avoiding the town centre when driving from Baldock Road to the A10. This would be an issue during construction and the future occupation of the proposed development.

Based on these issues, the site must be judged to be contrary to **paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy T1 of the Local Plan**. The proposal is also contrary to local planning guidance of the **Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide**.

Ecology – This proposed development will have a negative impact on at-risk species. Records of protected species on this site are available on ecology websites, but they have not been considered in the BNG report.

The limited BNG calculations show that the proposals will not comply to the 10% BNG within the site and is reliant on offsite mitigation. Since the site is located next door to Therfield Heath SSSI the greenspace provision will not be effective. New residents will simply cross the track to the much larger and more interesting SSSI.

Paragraph 193b of the NPPF states “development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest”

The current proposals would therefore have an adverse effect on Therfield Heath SSSI.

Flood Risk and Water Quality – the existing systems in Echo Hill and Sun Hill struggle to cope with surface water runoff. When the infiltration features on this proposed development fail or are overloaded this will increase the chance of flooding in central Royston.

The development site is situated above a major aquifer that supplies water to Royston and elsewhere. The area is classed as a “Source Protection Zone 1” due to the high risk to groundwater contamination, making the site far less suitable for development.

Health Capacity - There is no capacity within the local health providers to accommodate speculative development. Therefore, this development in Royston would adversely affect health services in the area to a significant degree. The proposed development should be considered a significant risk to the health, care and wellbeing of existing residents of Royston. The site would therefore conflict with ***Policy SP7 of the NHDC Local Plan and 55 to 58 of the NPPF***.

To summarise, this 2025 proposal does not overcome any of the negative features of the 2018 and 2020 proposals and therefore should be rejected as the other proposals were.

Yours sincerely

Ann Smith