

48 Echo Hill

Royston

Herts

SG89BB

**Ben Glover
Senior Planning Officer
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF**

Date: 16th August 2025

Dear Mr Glover,

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

OBJECT.

I strongly object to this application.

Whether coincidental or calculated the timing of this application by Gladman Developments Limited only re-enforces my opinion that they have a total disregard for local communities and the impact their development proposals have on residents and towns. I urge the Council to reject this and any future applications as they are vague, mis-leading ill thought out and very underhanded.

I am very mindful of the pressures on council resources. This third application by Gladman which is virtually the same if not worse than the two that were previously rejected just adds to those pressures and wastes councils time.

As already mentioned In previous application objections Briary Lane is too narrow for the considerable increase of traffic that another 84 dwellings would bring. That is even before you get to the one access point in and out of Echo Hill. There is also only one way to get to that access point and that is Sun Hill. Sun Hill is not only too narrow but has only two access points itself. One directly off Briary Lane and another from Coronation Ave(also too narrow) which is a turning off Briary Lane as well. The access to Sun Hill from London Road(A10) is No Entry for safety reasons and is very narrow and very steep. Any extra traffic(construction

or otherwise) would seriously compromise road safety not only to traffic on the A10 but to pedestrians walking to the town centre and local schools. I also believe that Sun Hill would be irreversibly damaged with regards to flora/fauna and structurally by very heavy construction vehicles if not by the extra traffic.

Once on Echo Hill (with cars usually parked opposite the junction) you have a steep narrow access that curves sharply to the right (a blind bend when coming down from the opposite direction). This road has cars and other vehicles parked on both sides and was never designed to carry the amount of traffic it has presently let alone the extra traffic that 84 dwellings would inevitably bring. It is worth mentioning that during wintery conditions ice and snow any vehicles large or small have difficulty getting up Briary Lane and Echo Hill. Any vehicles large or small have difficulty negotiating Echo Hill at the best of times. **I have attached some images that I hope will show more clearly the problems.**



In the present climate we all get torrential downpours more often than in the past and the drainage is a big issue in this part of Royston. With any development less water would be allowed to soak into the ground and even now flowing water reaches all roads in close proximity and usually ends up running into the town centre.

I would also take this opportunity to list a number of other significant reasons why this proposed development should be rejected.

1. Housing Supply & Local Plan

Site lies outside the settlement boundary and is not allocated in the NHDC Local Plan (2011-2031).

Steep topography, constrained access and enforceable covenants make delivery

unfeasible.

Royston already exceeds its contribution to the 5-year housing land supply.

2. Landscape & Visual Impact

Unchanged from previous refusals (2018, 2020/21): prominent hilltop position, marked harm to local character and key views (e.g. Therfield Heath SSSI).

Conflicts with NPPF, Policies CGB1, SP5, SP12, NE1 and NE6 of the Local Plan.

Access proposals further erode Echo Hill's character, contrary to NPPF Para 135 and Policy NE1.

3. Living Conditions

Nos 23 and 25 Echo Hill will suffer noise, dust and privacy loss during construction and occupation. Elevated site levels will create an overlooking and overbearing relationship. Conflicts with NPPF and Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

4. Highways & Transport

Fundamental unsustainability: isolated from services, school route via narrow, steep lanes.

Proposed access is undeliverable? safety audit lacks HCC Highways sign-off; no gradients or levels provided.

- o Travel plan underestimates topography; site will be car-dependent.

- o Conflicts with NPPF Paras 108-110, Policy T1 and Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide.

5. Ecology

No full pre-application surveys; BNG shows a deficit and relies on off-site mitigation. Proximity to Therfield Heath SSSI and adjacent LWS means on-site greenspace won't deter use of the SSSI. Conflicts with NPPF Para 193 (b).

6. Flood Risk & Water Quality

Steep site will overload Echo Hill drainage; attenuation features lack overland flow

analysis.

Above a Major Aquifer in SPZ1?high contamination risk.

Local sewage treatment is at capacity; further inflows threaten a protected chalk stream.

Conflicts with NPPF and Policy NE7 (g).

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

No EIA screening opinion or Environmental Statement submitted.

Previous applications were considered likely to require an ES, with objections from Therfield Heath Conservators.

8. Health Capacity

Local GP surgeries have confirmed no capacity for additional patients.

Conflicts with NPPF Paras 55-58 and Policy SP7 of the Local Plan.

9. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace(SANG)

Development in response to an application next to Thames Basin Heaths SSSI and concerns over biodiversity

NHDC use this to justify a mitigation strategy of providing alternative habitat when development depletes biodiversity.

But this ignores that the SANG criteria also required **no new homes within 400m of any of the constituent SSSIs** which would be the case for the application.

This is because it is considered that new residents would simply walk to the superior SSSI for recreation.

I would also like to make you aware of restrictive covenants which are in place in Echo Hill and which we as resident(s) of Echo Hill have the benefit of, and we reserve the right to take enforcement action if these covenants are breached.

The covenants were wrongly dismissed by NHDC planning during the previous determination of planning application 20/00744/OP.

The enforcement of the covenants would be a lengthy legal process possibly taking several years to be resolved. A tribunal action would therefore significantly delay the deliverability of the development. This factor therefore means that the possibility of a lengthy delay to implementation will become a material planning consideration in the decision-making process.

You are aware from the previously refused applications for this site the strength of feeling against this development from the community of Royston and the significant impact this development will have directly to the residents of Echo Hill. A letter from an Appointed Solicitor was issued to both Gladman and Number 24 Echo Hill during the previous application of 20/00744/OP, regarding the breach of the covenants and the intention for enforcement action, this remains the case for this latest application and Echo Hill residents will pursue this going forward for this latest application.

In addition, if the community is successful with enforcing the covenants and preventing the demolition of Number 24, both the construction traffic and main site access would not be able to enter the site via Echo Hill, the alternative would be to use the bridleway and therefore the reasons for refusal in the 2018 application associated with the negative impact to the neighbouring SSSI would still stand.

Therefore, due to the protective covenants in place, which residents of Echo Hill will enforce, it cannot be guaranteed that Gladman will be able to deliver this site and therefore this site cannot contribute towards the 5-year NHDC housing supply.

In summary, the adverse impacts on landscape, ecology, highways, local services and the Local Plan's housing strategy far outweigh any benefits. I urge the Council to refuse this application.