

Formal Objection to Planning Application by Gladman Developments

Planning Application Reference: 25/01696/OP

Location: Land East of Drovers Way, Pirton, North Hertfordshire, SG5 3EQ

Applicant: Gladman Developments

Date: 21/08/2025

1. Introduction

This document sets out a detailed objection to the planning application submitted by Gladman Developments for up to 130 dwellings on land east of Drovers Way, Pirton. The objection is rooted in sound planning policy and highlights unresolved and serious concerns around access, environmental impact, village character, infrastructure, and policy non-conformity. This submission draws on adopted policies within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031), the December 2024 revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and material planning history associated with the site.

2. Planning Context and Site Designation

The site (title HD541496) is approximately 8.3 hectares (20.5 ac) of predominantly undeveloped agricultural land. It is located outside the Pirton settlement boundary, in an area designated as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The site is not subject to Green Belt or Grey Belt policy, and it is not allocated for residential development within the adopted Local Plan. Previous applications for residential use on this site have been refused and dismissed at appeal.

3. Policy-Based Objections

3.1 Development Outside Settlement Boundary – Urban Sprawl

The proposed development sits well outside Pirton's built form and projects into open countryside. This conflicts with Policies SP2 and CGB1, which direct development to defined settlements and seek to restrict unjustified encroachment. The proposal would undermine the spatial hierarchy of development and result in linear sprawl, contrary to the character of Pirton.

3.2 Inadequate Vehicular Access via Coopers Elms

The sole vehicular access proposed via Coopers Elms is inadequate. This cul-de-sac is not designed for high traffic volumes or construction traffic. Manual for Streets 2 recommends two points of access for schemes exceeding 100 dwellings. The proposal fails to meet this threshold and creates safety and congestion risks, breaching Local

Plan Policy T1. There is already access related problems to the existing estate, based on a blind corner and an extra circa 200 vehicles will only add more danger.

3.3 Conflict with Bridleway and Green Infrastructure

The proposed access route crosses Bridleway PRoW13 (Hambridge Way), a public right of way valued for recreation and rural access. Its conversion into a vehicle crossing would degrade its amenity, pose safety risks to walkers and horse riders, and sever the green corridor. This contravenes Policies NE4 and SP6.

3.4 Destruction of Eastern Hedgerow and Green Buffer

The proposal removes a mature hedgerow and breaches the green corridor established in the approved Cala Homes scheme. This hedgerow forms part of a strategic green infrastructure buffer, previously accepted as the village's eastern edge. Its removal conflicts with Policy NE1 and the ecological mitigation secured through Cala's permission.

3.5 Archaeological and Heritage Constraints

The site and surrounding area are archaeologically sensitive. The new access route traverses previously unsurveyed land, risking harm to undiscovered heritage assets. This undermines NPPF paragraphs 205–207 and Local Plan Policy HE1, which require proper investigation and mitigation.

3.6 Unsustainable Scale of Development affecting services

130 dwellings would overwhelm Pirton. The village recently absorbed 78 homes at Comice Meadows. This proposal would double that growth, overloading infrastructure, services, and harming village character. It conflicts with the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan, and its scale breaches SP2 and SP1's emphasis on proportionate development.

Water

There are currently water pressure issues in the area. Accepted levels of water pressure nationally is 9 litres per minute. It has been measured, on the current Cala Homes estate at 5-7 litres depending on the time of day.

There is also a major issue with how water leaves Pirton. The current pipes/drainage cannot cope, and the village often suffers from terrible flooding. Adding any more house to this problem would be disastrous.

Roads

Vehicle access to Pirton is already dangerous. Access via Holwell is narrow with a one lane section that has two blind corners. Adding more vehicles to this would only be more dangerous and, I'm sure at some point, result in serious injury.

3.7 Undermining the Cala Homes Design Principles

The Cala Homes scheme was carefully planned with community input to respect Pirton's form and setting. Its design included a green buffer, bridleway protection, low-density edges, and access hierarchy. The Gladman proposal tramples those principles: breaching the green parkland buffer, introducing urban-scale density eastwards, and compromising shared infrastructure. This erodes the spatial integrity established through Cala's approval.

3.8 No Demonstrable Need

The Council currently has a 3.9-year housing land supply. While this triggers the NPPF's tilted balance, it does not justify overriding major harms. Paragraph 11(d)(ii) confirms that planning permission should still be refused where the adverse impacts significantly outweigh the benefits. This is the case here, given the access, ecological, heritage, and settlement pattern conflicts.

4. Conclusion and Requested Action

This proposal conflicts with numerous adopted policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, including SP1, SP2, SP6, T1, NE1, NE4, CGB1, HE1, and HS2. It undermines the principles established by the Cala Homes scheme and introduces unacceptable new harms. The cumulative effect of inappropriate access, ecological loss, archaeological risk, and unjustified village sprawl clearly outweighs any marginal benefit of additional housing.

I respectfully request that the Council refuse this application.

Andrew Pryn

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