

Mrs B C Carlin,
48 Echo Hill,
Royston,
Herts. SG8 9BB

12th August 2025

Ben Glover,

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

Dear Mr Glover,

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

OBJECT

I write in connection with the above planning application, I have examined the plans and supporting technical documents, and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development in this location, on the following grounds:

Housing Supply & Local Plan

This development site is not identified in the existing or emerging Local Plan for NHDC and is outside the settlement boundary identified the plan. The development of this site would present a significant engineering challenge due to the constrained access, steep topography and the protective covenants in place (which are to be enforced), the site is therefore unable to contribute to the NHDC 5-year housing land supply. The application should also be refused for its problematic location; its negative impact and its failure to comply with the adopted local plan (NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031).

Landscape & Visual Impact

This is the 3rd application for this site with previous applications refused. The reasons for those refusals in the 2018 and 2020/21 planning applications for landscape and visual impact still applies, as follows; the prominent position, the topography, the significant localised adverse impacts on the character of the area, the negative impact to visual receptors (which are unchanged in this application from previous versions), the marked change in the character of the immediate locality and wider valued landscape, such as the field Heath (SSSI). The same reason for refusal should therefore still apply to the current application.

There has not been any consideration to the direct effects of the access proposals on the character of Echo Hill which would be harmed by the proposed access arrangements. The

proposals would therefore be contrary to the general landscape protection policies of the **NPPF (including Paragraph 135), Policies NE1 of the adopted Local Plan.**

Highways and Transport

Current access via Briary Lane and Sun Hill into Echo Hill is exclusively via narrow roads. Residents park outside their houses along the kerbside further reducing the width of those roads to traffic. This is causing problems now in delays for all users.

Since the recent closure of a car park in Royston, many more rail commuters are now using Sun Hill and Echo Hill for their parking rather than Royston Station Car Park. This increases the length of roads with reduced width, making it even more hazardous for residents and delivery people to negotiate traffic.

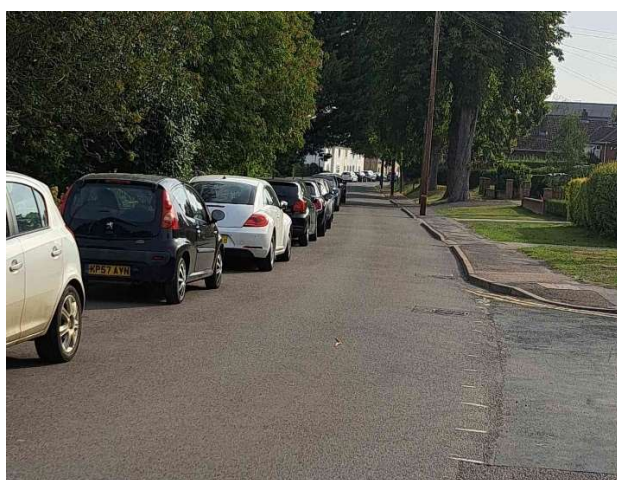


Fig. 1 & 1a. Photo taken Wednesday 13.08.25 at 09.10 a.m. shows Sun Hill at the bottom of Echo Hill and the continuous line of parked cars stretching passed Hillside.

Fig. 1a. shows the far end of the line of cars magnified.

Royston Fire Station staff recently posted on Facebook about the difficulties caused by inconsiderate parking that can delay their reactions to incidents & risking lives. For heavy duty vehicles such as waste disposal lorries, emergency vehicles or construction traffic, access to Echo Hill is impossible without driving up onto and along the pavements especially around tight corners. Any additional construction and the subsequent occupation of additional residences will further exacerbate these problems.

Ecology

As a resident of Echo Hill, we regularly see a wide variety of local wildlife, badgers, hedgehogs, bats, birds of prey and butterflies. Evidence of their local occupation is widespread. There has been no full survey prior to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations submitted in support of this site at planning. Records of the protected species have been provided on relevant ecology recording websites, up to present day but ignored. The major impact that this proposed

development could have on the ecology of the site and of the flora and fauna that live in the affected fields and adjacent on Thornfield Heath SSSI should be urgently reviewed.

Flood Risk & Water Quality

FLOOD RISK - In periods of heavy rain, at the bottom of Echo Hill we frequently see the road transformed into a fast-flowing water course. Development on this steep site will further overload Echo Hill drainage which is also above a Major Aquifer raising the worry of high contamination of the local water supply.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

No EIA screening opinion of Environmental Statement (ES) has been submitted. The previous applications were considered likely to require an ES, with objections from Thornfield Heath Conservators.

Agricultural Land

The development of the site will result in the loss of high-quality agricultural land. Food security is increasingly a worrying problem for all residents of this country especially with the escalating of production and delivery currently being experienced.

Covenants

As a resident of Echo Hill we reserve the right to take enforcement action if the covenants are breached. This would be a lengthy process possibly taking several years to be resolved.

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

Conclusion

To summarise, in considering all the above points, I strongly urge the Council to reject this damaging and unsustainable planning proposal in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan. The significant impacts this site has outweighs any potential benefits and I urge the Council to consider the strong and well-reasoned objections from residents.

Yours faithfully,

Cathy Carlin