

20a Mill Road, Royston, Herts. SG8 7AE

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

17th August 2025

Dear Mr Glover,

Reference: 25/01708/OP Outline planning permission for Land Opposite Heath Farm, Briary Lane, Royston

We write in connection with the above planning application, We have examined the plans and we know the site well.

We walk past the site regularly because of the views, wildlife and fauna. It is on a well-used circuit of footpaths leading to Therfield Heath, with its outstanding scientific interest and we have observed wild orchids, birds and wild animals specific to heathland habitats, nearby. We have been shown footage of badgers regularly visiting the back gardens of the immediately adjoining property, marked with dates and locations and can affirm the presence of protected species in the area. The local natural environment has lots of wildlife living in the hedgerows and trees surrounding the site. As well as the badgers, there are brown hare and grey partridge and a number of nesting rarer farmland birds. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 states local authorities are required to take measures to promote their preservation.

We wish to object strongly to the development of houses in this location. The need for additional housing is not adequately substantiated and there are many new building sites currently being developed in the immediate area, for example on the Baldock Road, at Burloes, on the Newmarket Road. A lack of a five years supply of housing land, if such is the case, should not override the importance of retaining the rural nature of this area south of Royston, which provides a necessary buffer to the protected Heath. It is the Council's responsibility and obligation to provide an adequate supply of building land. Its development plan clearly identifies that this site is in the designation 'rural' and is neither available nor suitable for housing.

The main vehicle access to the proposed site seems highly unsuitable. It is far too close to another cul-de-sac just one house away and dangerous manoeuvres will be necessary to access the site. An additional 84 houses will need to provide approximately 168 parking spaces, based on normal usage and these cars will issue on to a road from an access frontage that formerly accommodated just one, two or perhaps three cars. Furthermore, the third car would doubtless have been parked on the road outside the house as would houses immediately adjacent, and if the access is allowed, a double yellow line will appear covering site lines in both directions further reducing the parking available in Echo Hill.

The road layout provided to the site is a series of roads in a hierarchy from the main distributor roads at Baldock Street and the A10 (London Road) through local access roads to small cul-de-sacs. In accordance with this hierarchy, you would not expect that anything other than a cul-de-sac of just a few houses would be permitted in this location. Instead, there are 84 houses using this access and totally skewing the hierarchy introducing a much larger road with its additional danger and noise and traffic movements into what is an otherwise quiet and safe environment. It involves all vehicles making at least 3 sharp turns

down narrow roads which would not meet current regulations for this level of use. There is a significant level of on-street parking, involving cars having to wait to pass each other resulting in congestion even at current levels of usage. The roads involved are not appropriate routes for the additional traffic proposed and are currently in a poor state of repair. Finally, there is only one point of access to all the development, current and proposed, from a main distributor road at Baldock Street, the alternative access at the A10 being one way and issuing onto a very dangerous bend that has all the characteristics of an accident blackspot waiting to happen.

Because of the hilly nature of the site, we suspect that many residents would not walk to local facilities and would thus be car dependent, adding to the volume of traffic and would be contrary to government policy that new development should facilitate a greater level of pedestrian and cycle use.

Children walking to school will be endangered by the additional traffic. With the amount of on-street parking, including cars parked half on the footway, the width of the footway is not adequate. Push-chairs already have to use the road on occasion to get past parked cars. One can envisage dangerous situations arising regularly and the occasional serious accidents or even a fatality. The proposed footway widening along Sun Hill, would leave both the footpath and road compromised as well as the loss of some large mature trees.

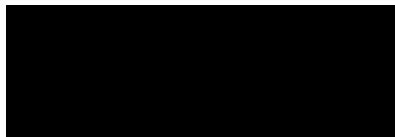
The impact of the additional volume of surface water generated by proposed access road to the existing highway drainage infrastructure within Echo Hill has not been adequately addressed and could be a potential flood risk to existing residents because of its elevated position.

The proposed site of development is at such an angle and height that future occupants of dwellings on this site would overlook the properties in Echo Hill, resulting in an invasion of their privacy and a significant reduction in their visual amenities. The District Wide Local Plan, Policy 6.8, states: "New developments will be expected to provide a high standard of layout and design that ensures adequate privacy for the occupants of the building and of adjacent residential properties."

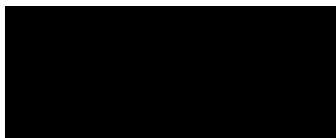
There is no capacity within the local primary school for the number of units proposed, as confirmed in the 2018 and 2020 applications.

To summarise, in considering all the above points, we strongly urge the council to reject this damaging and unsustainable planning proposal.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Jennie Harris



Mr Paul Harris MRTPI (rtd), DipTP