

**APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
A NEW QUARRY ON LAND AT THE FORMER HATFIELD AERODROME**

APPLICATION REFERENCE: PL/0232/21;

APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607

APPELLANT: Brett Aggregates Limited

**ADDRESS OR LOCATION AND THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: Land
at Hatfield Aerodrome, Off Hatfield Road, Hatfield, Hertfordshire**

14 March 2026

**Objection Statement – Ellenbrook Fields Quarry – with Regards to the newly proposed
Public Access Strategy**

Application ref: PL/0232/21

Appeal Reference: APP/M1900/W/3346607

I am writing regarding the forthcoming reconvened Inquiry into Brett Aggregates' proposal to quarry on Ellenbrook Fields - an area of essential open space, ecological importance, and daily amenity for residents of Hatfield, St Albans and the wider community. Across each previous application and Inquiry, I have submitted objections, both in writing and in person. My concerns remain unchanged and deeply felt.

Until now, Ellenbrook Fields has been a beautiful open space that myself, my husband and our dogs have enjoyed walking within, meeting up with friends and making new friends in the relaxed and open environment.

Alongside the long-standing issues relating to air-quality risks, increased HGV traffic on an unsuitable road network, and the site's proximity to Europe's largest recorded bromate contamination plume, I remain profoundly concerned that the applicants have still failed to produce an acceptable Public Access Strategy.

Although the Secretary of State has already ruled the earlier access proposals to be wholly unsatisfactory, the latest revisions continue to fall far below the required standard for **"attractive and unfettered"** access to Ellenbrook Country Park. This guarantee was a fundamental public benefit secured in 2000. That obligation will not be met by Brett's proposals.

Key Objections

1. Loss of Accessible, All-Weather Routes

The existing concrete taxiway is the only consistently usable, year-round route across the park, relied upon by cyclists, wheelchair users, families with prams, and people with limited mobility.

Under the current proposal:

- Only **approximately 40%** of this essential route would remain.
- The rest would be replaced with **grass and gravel paths**, which:
 - become **waterlogged and unusable in winter**,
 - are **narrow**, often bordering close to a very busy main road,
 - are unsuitable for **wheelchairs, mobility scooters, buggies** and many elderly visitors.
- The loss of long sightlines would greatly reduce perceived safety, particularly for lone or vulnerable visitors.

This represents a significant, unjustified reduction in safe, inclusive access.

2. Safety, Visual Amenity and Bunding

There are many existing examples of quarries demonstrating poor landscaping and visual amenity outcomes created by large, unsuccessfully planted bunds and abrupt boundaries. The new proposals put forward by the appellant replicate these issues:

- Footpaths placed beside **3–5m high bunds**, adjacent to fencing and quarry plant.
- Loss of clear sightlines which are essential for user safety and feeling of wellbeing.
- Reduced sense of openness, contrary to the purpose and character of the country park.

This design is incompatible with the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements for safe, inclusive, well-designed public spaces.

3. Lagoons as a Barrier to Cross-Park Access

The proposed lagoons occupy a large central area, creating a permanent barrier between Ellenbrook/Salisbury Village and Smallford.

Key concerns include:

- Only a **narrow 3m grass path** between the lagoons, which will become **muddy and impassable** in winter.
- Minimal fencing beside **very deep water**, posing avoidable safety risks; or alternatively unsightly tall safety fencing on both sides of a narrow path.
- Loss of the current wide, open route enjoyed by most visitors.

The Environment Agency has already advised that the lagoons **cannot be relocated** due to the need to buffer the bromate plume. If essential infrastructure cannot be safely integrated without blocking the essential and currently unfettered east - west access, the overall scheme does not deliver a functioning country park.

4. Proximity to Quarry Operations and Traffic Routes

Many of the proposed routes run directly beside or across:

- active quarry workings,
- haul roads used by **HGVs and dumper trucks**,
- the plant site and internal access roads.

Consequences include:

- Exposure to noise, dust and particulate pollution.
- Crossings, gates and diversions that contradict any definition of “unfettered” access.
- Unsafe conditions for children, dog walkers and vulnerable users.

The applicant’s claim that **85% of the park will remain accessible** is misleading, as it includes areas outside their control and does not reflect the actual usability of routes.

5. Failure to Integrate Restored Phases

The proposed layout makes clear that restored areas cannot be integrated into the wider park:

- The lagoons and large “worked area” create a **long-term barrier** lasting most of the quarry’s lifetime, with the lagoons remaining forever in situ.
- Narrow gaps around the plant site and worked areas prevent meaningful connectivity.
- The suggestion of incremental hand-back is unrealistic given **legal, safety and cost constraints**.

As shown in the applicant’s own Public Access Strategy, the restored phases would remain isolated long into the future.

Conclusion

Despite multiple opportunities provided by the Secretary of State, the revised Public Access Strategy remains fundamentally flawed. It fails to reflect how the park is currently used, disregards established desire lines, long sightlines and the need for safe, inclusive, all-weather routes.

The long-standing concerns expressed by the community, the Inspector and the Secretary of State have not been resolved. It is now reasonable to conclude that the applicants are unable to deliver an access plan capable of meeting the required standard.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge that these proposals and this appeal be rejected.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa & Cliff Meader