

Darren King
The Haybarn
Southern Green Farm
Rushden
Herts
SG9 0SX

30th October 2025

Re: Planning Application 25/01947/FP

I would like to submit my objections to the above planning application and ask that my objection be added to the public portal.

Impact on Countryside and Scenic Views

A development of this size, directly next to the A507 for several miles, would be visible to thousands of people travelling on this road every week, significantly detracting from the natural beauty of the countryside and would make it feel as though one was driving through a large scale industrial installation, which is exactly what it would be. There must be so many alternative sites that would be hidden from plain view which would surely result in a much lower impact on the scenic views that many residents, visitors and other road users currently enjoy.

Threat to Wildlife and Natural Habitats

It is difficult to see how a site of over 900 acres could have anything other than a devastating impact on local ecosystems and the wildlife habitats that support birds, animals, insects, and other important species.

Noise and Loss of Rural Tranquillity

Even after the 2-4 year building program with its constant noise from pile driving and heavy machinery and equipment was completed, the volume of traffic associated with running and maintaining such a colossal site would be completely unsuitable for the local road systems and it is impossible to see how these could be improved sufficiently to reduce the impact to an acceptable level. In short, the development of this site would result in an unacceptable level of noise and heavy traffic and would destroy the peaceful, rural character the area is well known for as well as disturbing much important wildlife.

Safety Risks from Battery Storage

The massive number of battery storage units present unacceptable fire pollution risks and, without a massive increase in the capacity of the local fire brigades, it is difficult to see how any major incident could be brought under control in a safe and timely manner, raising serious concerns for the health and safety of those living nearby and anyone cycling or walking in the area.

I have included links below to several YouTube videos showing news footage of BESS fires. These burn for a long time, emit very dangerous and toxic gases and are extremely difficult to put out. In the case of BESS units catching fire next to the A507 the road could be closed for several weeks or more and areas as far away as Stevenage see evacuations due to hazardous smoke. It is difficult to imagine the disruption a major fire would cause to the closer populations of Baldock and local villages.

https://youtu.be/kypWAZTeiD4?si=4HsMQMmO1dsH1c_0

https://youtu.be/_tyCV5RpLIY?si=NbvrjdRgDlmvf6Ki

<https://youtu.be/YRnNfFuQwNk?si=3frYDO0WOu7dtUSE>

https://youtu.be/yjUpwqlu_TM?si=ubUEmIPlyW9Vhlos

<https://youtu.be/dcUGgKxUP5s?si=eKxEc75c0QObBE28>

In Summary

There is almost no aspect of modern life more urgent or important than that of tackling climate change but planning decisions must not be made ignoring the usual considerations toward local impact simply because they involve the generation of clean energy. Thoughtful and responsible decision making should still be the default rather than automatic granting of consent regardless of the consequences for the local area. The current government policy on solar developments appears to ignore this balance entirely, and this application is inconsistent with both national and local planning guidelines. There is also a huge housing shortage, but it would not be possible to convert fertile and productive farmland into housing estates simply by putting in a planning application highlighting this fact.

In this case, the drawbacks are substantial and the case for granting planning permission severely flawed.

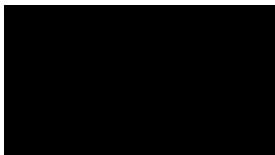
The risk of losing a cherished part of the local landscape has not been fully considered and the damage to biodiversity underassessed. Subjecting the local population to years of disruption by way of heavy traffic and constant noise is simply not an acceptable option when alternative sites with a significantly lower environmental impact have not been properly explored.

There is no critical need for this specific site to be built in order to meet UK energy goals — alternative locations and multiple smaller-scale proposals exist that would be far less damaging, but these not be as profitable, unfortunately one of the key motivations for the proposed developer. The problem is that once permission has been given for one development on this then others will follow but the value of our countryside should surely outweigh short-term financial gain for non-resident land owners.

I would also like to point out that there is a huge increase in the number of houses being built with solar panels installed, or existing dwellings having them retrofitted. In many cases these installations are so efficient that excess energy is routinely sold into the national grid. I suspect that within a very short period of time the need for massive industrial installations of solar panels will be completely unnecessary but, the danger is, that by then huge swathes of our countryside will have been destroyed forever. I also believe that existing planning permissions for solar farms already far outstrip the national requirement for solar generated power in order to meet Net Zero targets and so I fail to understand why there is the need for more, other than this being driven purely by the motive of profit.

For these reasons I urge North Herts District Council to reject this application, thereby reflecting the views of local residents and upholding sound planning principles in order to safeguard the character and environment of North Hertfordshire. This rejection would demonstrate that renewable energy projects must be implemented in a way that respects both people and place and that there is no 'presumed acceptance' for applications relating to sites of this scale and environmental impact.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Darren King.

Darren King