

Mr Fareed Ali,
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22nd Aug 2024

To: Shaun Greaves
North Herts Council Planning Control

case ref: 24/01002/FP

Change of use of existing three barns to office and storage space and the erection of supporting substation and concrete base. Land at Church Wood, Three Houses Lane, Codicote, Herts

Dear Shaun

Further to your notification letter dated 7th Aug 2024

I OBJECT to this proposal due to its harm to the protected Green Belt and historic natural environment where the proposal is located, and its impact on my residential amenity as a nearby resident. Specifically:

1. Inappropriate usage in the protected Green Belt

- The proposed location is on the Green Belt within high quality local bluebell woods of intrinsic open character and beauty, directly adjacent to the Designated Ancient Woodland of Winter/ Graffridge Woods, and is a stepping stone on wildlife movement corridors between this ancient woodland and the Node Designated Ancient Woodland around 200m to the south. These Hertfordshire country lanes and woodlands are enjoyed by locals, and the location is adjacent to residential homes.
- Changing use from the previously unlit (the site is not serviced by mains electricity) agricultural storage barns for corn, straw, game birds and ancillary equipment to an industrial storage facility with a standalone generator substation, ancillary security lighting and fencing to protect the stored materials, and ongoing operations of HGV traffic in narrow country lanes surrounded by designated heritage ancient woodland causes harm to the Green Belt, harms the natural protected environment and will create noise and light pollution where none currently exists. The proposal gives no details of expected HGV movements and other employee traffic in order to assess the traffic harm, however the applicants own ecological survey recognises in section 4.4 that the following post-development ongoing harms from the change-of-use proposal are likely to affect the surrounding woodland habitats and associated flora and fauna:
 - Noise; Light-pollution; Dust; Waste materials
- Sections 2, 13 and 15 of the NPPF makes it clear that protections of the Green Belt and the natural environment exist to preserve the setting and special character of the countryside and to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging reuse of urban land outside of the Green

Belt for industrial usage, and that exceptions to impact the Green Belt should only be made for activities which:

- are sustainable (right use of land in the right place)
 - promote a strong local rural economy
 - are for the purposes of local agriculture
 - protect the natural historic environment
 - safeguard wildlife-rich habitats and improve biodiversity
 - minimise pollution
 - or are 'very special circumstances'
- The proposal shows no evidence supporting any of these characteristics and thus should be rejected. The location is not the right place or use for such a facility and other more sustainable brownfield locations in Hertfordshire should be sought that are more suited to industrial storage and ancillary HGV traffic.

2. Negative impact on my residential amenity

- The proposal gives no indication of likely HGV and employee related traffic movements, but given the nature of the industrial use proposed it is likely that ongoing post-development operations will create new noise from reversing HGVs, noise from the loading and unloading of industrial steel components, noise from the generator substation and light pollution from security lighting in a currently unlit area, which could impact on my residential amenity as a neighbour (approx. 250 m away).
- Should North Herts Council be minded to approve the proposal then I would expect significant conditions around HGV movements, noise and light pollution from post-development ongoing operations to be applied, given its ancient woodland setting and proximity to residential homes.

3. Other considerations

- According to the North Herts Council planning portal, *and the applicants own supporting schematics for 24/01002/FP*, the current approved farmyard buildings at the location should only comprise:
 - i. a machinery and storage barn to support local agriculture (05/01337/1) and subsequent change of use to three bed dwelling (22/01891/FP);
 - ii. an agricultural barn for the storage of corn (14/02866/1AG)
 - iii. an open-sided barn for the storage of straw (18/01478/AG)
- It is worth highlighting that significant additional works at the proposals' location have progressed above and beyond the above approvals since 26/3/2024 which have created a new significant extension of the corn barn (at least 50% footprint increase), extended concrete aprons and a new building north of the straw barn.
- If this is indeed permitted development, I would like to suggest that North Herts Council Planning department examine whether inappropriate harms to the Green Belt have already accrued from it.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to outline for the consideration of the North Herts Council Planning Department my OBJECTION to this proposed development **ref: 24/01002/FP**

Yours Sincerely
Fareed Ali