

Popefield Farm



Popefield Farm sits at the epicentre of the site

- 1) 4 families and a business of 10 people
- 2) Listed grade 2 structure
- 3) Renovated at a cost of £750k 15 years ago
- 4) Saved from destruction..previous owners Arlington
- 5) Popefield has stood for 350 years..but the fields around were looked after by farmers who harmoniously worked the land.



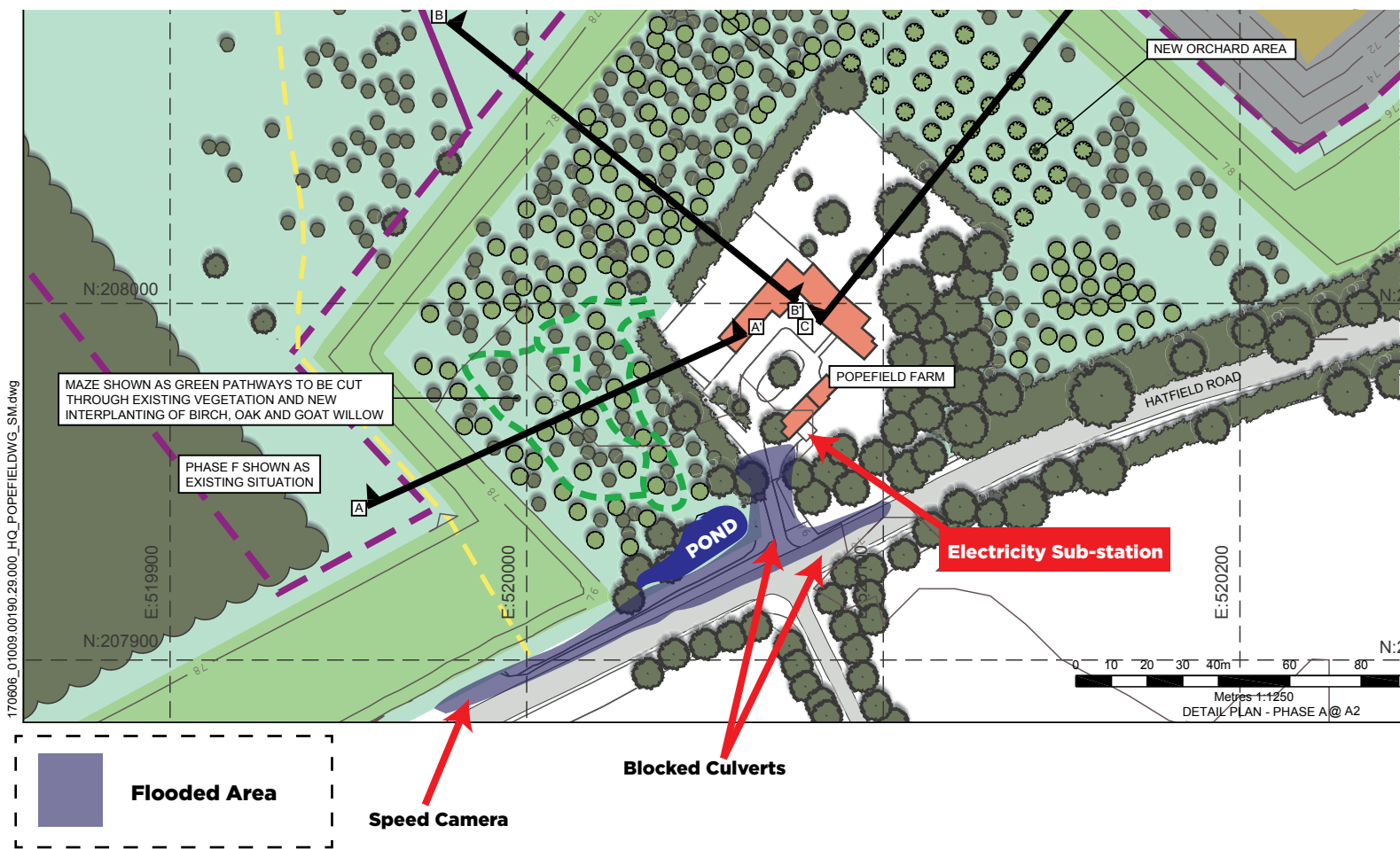
The Proposal offers up multiple unacceptable risks to Popefield and its residents.

- 1) Flooding along the beck that runs adjacent to the Hatfield road.
- 2) The pond next to Popefield has been linked for over 200 years to the drainage off the fields. If it is not maintained it back floods into Popefield....it is not maintained by Arlington.
- 3) Noise, airborne, particulate on the road....danger to children playing in the garden Popefield Farm.
- 4) No specific guarantee or tailored insurance that Popefield won't suffer from issues due to groundwater table changes. We really fear that this listed building will collapse..it has a wooden sub frame.

THE SITE WILL BE BLIGHTED

Popefield Farm Pond Flooding

Lack of clearing/management of the pond by Arlington is the main reason for the flooding into Popefield Farm.



General

- 1) Circa 20 years ago councillors signed up with the landowner 'Arlington' that the Ellenbrook Trust should have been set up.
- 2) This trust was mandated to keep an eye on the site.

The none setting up of the Trust was linked to a penalty of £1.4mn index linked that now stands at £2.5mn owed..

It did not serve the purpose of the landowners Arlington to have the site improved.

The North Herts Spatial unit, Brett have all presumed that the gravel extraction would go ahead.

Its designation on a plan of 1996 is now outdated...the area around the site has changed and Arlington have sold land for housing and the University.

The Environment & the future

The University campus with 15k students did not exist next to this site 20 years ago

More housing has been built and is planned..more traffic.

The Paris Climate accord/COP26 have rightly focussed more attention on climate and biodiversity...this includes sites like this.

Terraforming subsurface we know poses risks that cannot be modelled 100%. Risk is therefore magnified exponentially with scale

This isn't just gravel extraction!

The 8 million tons of gravel is matched with presumably 8 million tons of other inert material which is loaded into the site.

THE OTHER 8mn tons is a bigger problem than the gravel extraction..but is never addressed by anyone.

This material is not naturally formed...It is going to have permeability/porosity different to sand/gravel. It will have other environmental problems..water quality.

The scale of the development gives the opportunity for massive problems..a giant plug for example will not act like a naturally formed gravel bed.

This public enquiry

Consistently the council has not kept objectors informed...it is a democracy of procedure based on the past gravel extraction going ahead at some point. Even the developer is now re-submitted their plan. This wastes time and money..this public enquiry needs to address this also.

Against all odds, all councils voted democratically against this dangerously destructive scheme.

GRAVEL EXTRACTION does not quite adequately describe the problems that will arise if this scheme is given the go-ahead.

With problems come COST to the public...to the ordinary electorate.

SCALE brings EXPONENTIAL problems

TRUST and Sense

Do I trust Brett to tell you about the pond next to Popefield which is on Arlington land and floods because it is never maintained?

It is always obscured in SLR maps..skilfully avoided.

Do I expect noise detection data to reflect the tranquility of the northern boundary which has many animals and birds of prey circling it..it was pointed to the road to inflate noise levels.

All proposals put the economics of maximising gravel yield from the site...even down to the boundary from Popefield curtilage which is only 60 metres..which includes bunds that will move.

The whole site is on green belt and is the only buffer between Hatfield and St Albans. Nobody would reasonably create this massive hole and fill it in over half a life time next to St Albans and Hatfield.

The Park

People don't start with an environmental disaster and then post rationalises a park.

The massive opportunity of planning a park and getting it started is missed here.

Society needs the park just as humans need lungs. It is old thinking that puts this proposal on the table. the scale of the site...which is 3x the volume of the biggest object humans ever made...the great pyramid of Khufu at Giza should not be underestimated.

As said...the groundwater situation if this goes ahead might render growing anything problematic...who picks up the cost?

No real costed plans of a park and defined 'PARK FIRST' plans have ever been submitted. It is all an afterthought.

Trust

We have to ask?

Do we value our heritage?

Do we value the environment?

Are we good custodians to serve our children and grandchildren?

Transparency has not been top of the agenda in this debate..confidential deals between water providers and Brett.

We know communication even before Covid was poor with planning. This is not improved even with this submission.

Moves to change the 106 agreement because the land owner has not done what they signed up to do 20 years ago... are very disturbing.

The Ordinary public

They live on the basis that local democracy fits within a UK wide green belt plan.

They live at places like Popefield farm and surely have rights not be flooded or have noise or dust or stress because big business feels it can have sway over councils.

A lot of those opposed to this development are not ORDINARY. They see the harm and risk and problems that this development will bring. They live in the real world locally and see enough problems in the future with the uncertainty of Climate Change without adding to the problem.



Popefield Farm Photos (taken on 18th August 2021)

You can see from the photos how tranquil, peaceful and well maintained Popefield Farm is for all the residents and business.



**Entrance area to
Popefield Farm**

Popefield Farm Photos (taken on 18th August 2021)



This is where the staff of
the small business park

Popefield Farm Photos (taken on 18th August 2021)



Childrens play area with swings, basketball net and trampoline at Popefield Farm

Popefield Farm Photos (taken on 18th August 2021)



Thank You

David Jackson

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Owner of Listed Popefield farm
Representing 4 families and an award winning
small business at Popefield Farm AL4 OHW