

Land at former Hatfield Aerodrome, Hatfield

Ref: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607

PUBLIC INQUIRY

Conditions Statement and proposed conditions pertinent to Popefield Farm

by Paul S Harding B.Sc. (Est Man) FRICS

on behalf of:

The David and Victoria Jackson “owners”

and the residential and commercial Occupiers of Popefield Farmhouse and
barns

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INTRODUCTION

David Jackson together with Victoria Jackson as owners of Popefield Farm have maintained a consistent objection to the proposed gravel extraction proposal from the outset due to the impact that the scheme as proposed would have on their Grade 2 Property and the occupiers who enjoy the house and barns as their home and business working environment set at the edge of the Ellenbrook Country Park.

Their objections on the overall scheme have been on the development in the Green Belt, the loss of amenity of Ellenbrook Park, the public safety fears from potential pollution as well as traffic, noise, air and ground stability concerns. Also, increasingly the fear that the democratic will of the residents, local councillors and County Councillors are being ignored

Their specific concerns relating to Popefield Farm have been and continue to be those as outlined by David Jackson in his presentation specifically

- The distance of the Extraction works from Popefield damaging the setting of the listed properties.
- The lack of clarity over a definitive plan correctly representing Popefield farm
- The uncertainty over the landscaping scheme proposed, both in its installation, longevity and maintenance
- The structural risks to Popefield Farm driven particularly by potential changes to the water table and aquifers
- Noise levels causing disturbance to resident's quiet enjoyment of their homes and gardens
- Air pollution risks for families from the extraction work in such close proximity to children playing in the Popefield gardens.
- Traffic impact on access and egress from Popefield especially with the entrance road in the latest plans having been moved even closer to Popefield.
- Potential flooding from the land and also from the pond adjoining the property entrance if this is not consistently maintained.

It is these concerns that drive our proposed Conditions which we would wish to see imposed in the hopefully unlikely event that this totally unsuitable scheme is given approval by the Sec of State.

It may seem unusual to have to go to such lengths but it really is all a symptom of the scheme as proposed by the applicant which put in simple terms is

Too Much, Too Near and for Too Long.

The proposed conditions are as detailed below

Condition 1 – Distances from Extraction

From day one the owners of Popefield Farm have contended that the distance from the listed properties to the extraction area is insufficient. A distance of 250 metres from the buildings was proposed.

This was later compromised to 150m This is still not accepted by the applicant. We are now in a situation where as you have heard from David Jackson confusion reigns supreme in respect of the applicants plans of the boundary, the measurements and the distances. As the applicant has had to open this can of worms due to their errors, we take the opportunity to ask the Inspector to undertake a sensible review of the distances from the workings to the farmhouse and buildings with the proposition that the workings should be no nearer than 150m from the boundary of Popefield Farm.

We would seek a clear condition to this effect. The condition should also require a definitive map with correct distances, sections and scaling to be produced and agreed between the parties.

Reason

To protect the setting of the listed Popefield Farm and to provide some protection from disturbance for the occupiers

Condition 2 – Agreed landscaping scheme

Formally agree and implement a scheme of Landscaping around Popefield that includes those, matters previously detailed and promised including

- Enhanced planning to the north west area between Popefield and phases C and D
- The establishment of an orchard to the north east between Popefield and Phase A
- The establishment of the maze including cut and maintained paths to the south west adjoining phase E
- The creation and planting of long-term bunds along the edge of phases A, C, D and E.
- The above to be set out in a clear statement by the operator and signed off by the Popefield owners and County Council

Reason

To protect the setting of Popefield Farm and to provide for privacy and some chance of peaceful enjoyment of the house and gardens by the residents

Condition 3 – Structural stability

Popefield Farm and barns are Grade 2 listed originally built in the 17th Century. Their structural integrity is paramount especially after the extensive renovations that have been undertaken over the past 20 years. The consistency of the ground and water levels etc are of great importance for the historic foundations. The major disruption to the area's natural topography will potentially place the buildings at risk. The operator needs to recognise that and accept a level of responsibility should the workings damage the buildings structural integrity.

We propose a condition that requires the operator to undertake a base position full structural survey that is agreed and signed off between operator and owner

Should damage occur at anytime the survey will act as a base position to assess, agree and implement repairs at the cost and liability of the operator

Furthermore, should the proximity of the workings at any time result in the owner being unable to obtain full insurance due to the close proximity of the works the operator will be stand as insurer for the duration of the extraction.

Reason

To protect the structural integrity of the listed properties and the safety of the homes and businesses for their occupiers

Condition 4 – Noise monitoring and remedial action

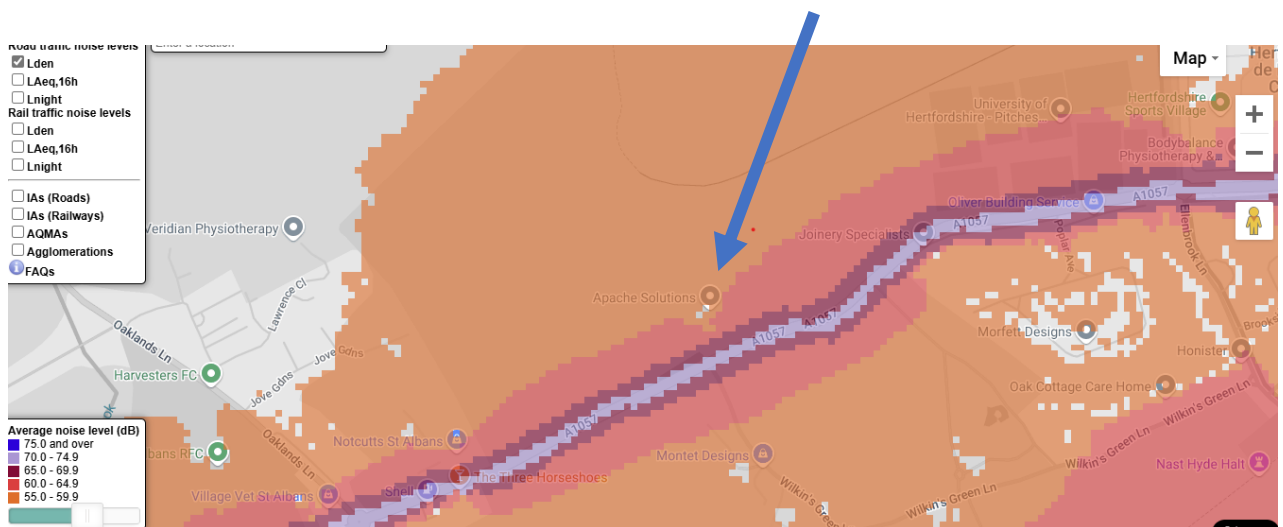
The location of Popefield in relation to the Quarry means that it will be impacted by significant close quarters noise from all directions

- The quarrying machines and work in Phases A B C D E
- The Entrance and exit road which has in the latest proposals been moved closer to Popefield
- The Hatfield Road that will see an unprecedented level of increased HGV traffic all accelerating and deaccelerating outside Popefield Farm as they leave or enter the site.

We seek a clear condition that allows for regular noise monitoring from the farmhouse from a base monitoring level prior to the start of works. (an amount to be agreed) Note ambient noise using available data shows the Road results in Popefield experiencing between 60 and 64.9 dB. whereas the Ellenbrook Park level is in the order of 40 to 42dB.

We would suggest a level above the current level but well below the road level at say 50dB

If Noise levels are at times greater the applicant is required to take further remedial actions by way of review of machinery or working practices to reduce the noise levels to an acceptable level commensurate with the reasonable expectations of residents and businesses living and operating in this location as suggested above



Reason

To protect the physical and mental wellbeing of the Popefield residents.

Condition 5 – Air monitoring and remedial action

We seek a condition for the health and wellbeing of the Popefield residents that requires the installation of air monitoring equipment at Popefield and its regular review to monitor the impacts. We would wish to agree acceptable levels, on which we would take professional advice, and agree that should these levels be exceeded remedial action must be taken by the applicant in terms of his working methods including dust suppression systems or work programme given certain wind conditions. The impact of the road with the increased HGV traffic should also be monitored and have agreed levels set.

Reason

Air pollution is one of the most frightening health impacts of the quarrying proposals for current and future residents. The particles in the air can cause respiratory issues and for those with pre-existing conditions as well as children the impacts are extremely dangerous and long lasting.

Condition 6 – Flood alleviation

Flooding around the entrance to Popefield from the Hatfield Road and to the property's drive occurs now from time to time. The owner fear is due to the extensive ground works changes will occur to water courses whereby this problem could become exacerbated.

The owners therefore would want to see a condition that requires the operator to monitor water levels and maintain the natural pond which should help alleviate the problem. If it becomes worse due to the activities a scheme to alleviate the problem should be agreed with the County and Council and implemented.

Furthermore, at all times lorries tyres should be washed before leaving site to reduce the risk of mud on the road which in turn blocks drains and creates a flood risk

Reason

To protect Popefield and its residents from the risk of flooding and resultant damage to property and possessions together with risk of losing insurance cover

Condition 7 – Security

These are no public rights of way from the Ellenbrook Park across Popefield Farms land. The proposed scheme as drawn includes increased access for walkers between the farm and the bunds. It also includes for an access point to the walkways from Popefield and a further access to the maze.

Whilst not objecting to these in principle we would ask for a condition that each access point is provided with a lockable gate controlled by the owners of Popefield.

Reason

To enable the long-term security of the property and safety and security of its residents. Furthermore, to make clear that no public right of way exists or is deemed to be created.

Condition 7 – Light pollution

With gravel extraction allowed for 51/2 days per week plus a further day's maintenance allowed it means that activity will be almost continuous. In the evenings and in the winter, we fear that this will result in significant lighting in contrast to the current situation whereby the Ellenbrook fields offer a dark sky and peaceful setting to Popefield residents.

We seek a condition that will minimise light pollution effecting Popefield Farm including the banning of lighting other than very minimal security lighting outside operational hours. Also, specific action to be taken by the County Council to enforce the removal of any direct lights that are disturbing the occupiers quiet enjoyment of their homes and gardens

Reason

To protect Popefield and its residents from the impact of an urbanised environment and direct lighting onto their homes and businesses,