Put your name, address, phone number and email address here -> Mr John Smith

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Marden

Tonbridge

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TN12 3AB

01622 123456

email@website.com

Mr A Reynolds

Mid Kent Planning Support

Maidstone House

King Street

Maidstone

ME15 6JQ

11/04/2021 <- Put the date here

Re - Planning Application MA/20/505751, Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 9SJ

Dear Mr Reynolds

I am writing to you in order to lodge a **formal objection** to the planned construction of three poultry units at Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 9SJ (Planning Application Number MA/20/505751).

I am aware that the applicant has recently supplied further information, and made changes to what is proposed, after receiving almost unanimously negative feedback to their original proposal. Despite these changes, I am of the view that redevelopment of Reed Court Farm as an industrial scale chicken farm should not be permitted.

In addition to issues that have already been highlighted in objections to the original application I continue to have a number of concerns, which are summarised below.

**The River Beult SSSI**

Fridays and their planning consultants, DHA, are now proposing to leave a 25m buffer between the fenced in ranges and the river. Whilst this is a substantial increase over their original design, it is hard to see how this will be effective in preventing any negative impact on the Beult given that the buffer zone is crossed by multiple streams, ditches and culverts. When the river bursts its banks, as it has done on multiple occasions this winter, then the buffer zone will be effectively removed as the river increases in size.

It should be noted that the SSSI is now confirmed, by the Environment Agency, as in a “failed chemical state”. I understand that this is due to tougher regulations recently introduced, but the applicants documents still incorrectly state the current condition of the site. Any decision about potential impact on the river must be made in light of the correct, current information.

There have been several responses to the original application questioning assumptions made in the reports calculating the impact of chicken waste and runoff on the river and there has been no response to any of these concerns.

Whilst I am pleased to see attempts to protect the river from this development, the steps taken do not go far enough to be able to say that the changes proposed will do no further harm to this “failed” SSSI.

**Flooding**

Many respondents to the original application have commented on the issues caused by regular flooding on and around Reed Court Farm. These events will routinely reduce the usable area in the fenced in ranges and add to the risk of waste runoff into the river. The proposed entrance to the site also floods with regularity, and neither of these issues has been addressed in the additional information provided by Fridays and DHA.

The proposed route for HGVs, as previously noted, also floods and again the applicant has made no attempt to describe how the issues this will undoubtedly cause will be mitigated.

**Highways and Footpaths**

The responses to the proposal have already highlighted that the numbers of HGVs travelling through the hamlet of Chainhurst, and then onto the A229 through busy junctions, with a known accident history, is contested. The peaks in vehicle activity when poultry flocks are being culled or restocked are clearly higher than the numbers mentioned in the applicants revised transport statement.

The updated document contains only very basic analysis of the proposed HGV route and does not make clear the risks of meeting an oncoming HGV, or tractor and trailer, in the middle of the road, at national speed limit, and all on a road classified as unsuitable for HGVs.

DHA have now supplied a plan of the proposed impact on footpaths. It confirms that the Public Rights of Way in question are either eradicated and wholly rerouted between range fencing or along access roads on the site, or moved to the boggy land adjacent to the river.

Fridays have still not applied to the County Council to make any of the footpath changes that they suggest are vital to the biosecurity of the site. Planning guidance suggests that this should be done in parallel with the planning process.

**Ecology and Habitat**

There remain many areas of concern about potential impact to the protected species and significant habitats across Reed Court Farm. Multiple queries have been raised in responses to the original application about the validity and method of some of the surveying techniques but despite this a huge variety of flora and fauna has been recorded. For example, in the additional material submitted by DHA I note that a thriving Barn Owl population has been added to the extensive list of breeding birds noted.

Various mitigations have been suggested in the updated response, but all seem to fall short of what is required to protect the environment. For example, the buffer between the ranges and the ancient woodland has been increased from 5m to 10m, but this falls short of the normal expected buffer of 15m. Whilst it is proposed to plant trees and replace removed hedgerow sections, it will take years for these newly planted areas to be effective in either improving habitat or reducing runoff into the river.

Overall, the risk to the existing wildlife of Reed Court Farm is still too great to allow this development to proceed.

In summary, when all of the factors above are considered, it is clear that despite the changes to their original proposal, the scheme will still have a demonstrable detrimental impact upon local people, the surrounding countryside and ecology, and the wider environment. There are still areas of inconsistency and confusion in the large amount of complex documentation provided. To give a small number of examples, neither the enormous buildings nor the biosecure site will apparently have any outside lighting, trucks to remove waste water are never considered in the transport plan, large mammal routes between areas of woodland haven’t been considered, and permission isn’t sought for any ancillary buildings on site.

The changes they have made to what was originally proposed seem ill thought through at best and don’t go far enough for me to even begin to consider that the application should be approved, and I therefore urge you to **refuse permission** for this development.

Yours sincerely

John Smith <- Put your name here, and sign

{SIGNATURE}