

D21/76809
DA423/2019(3) – PR26437



26 November 2021

Planning Panel Secretariat
Western Regional Planning Panel
320 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION DA 423/2019(3) – 643 MITCHELL HIGHWAY, ORANGE

Reference is made to the abovementioned application to modify development consent at 643 Mitchell Highway, Orange.

An information report in relation to this matter was considered by Council at its meeting on Tuesday, 2 November 2021. The Council resolved at that meeting to strongly object to the proposal by ITP Development Pty Ltd to extend the life of the solar farm for an additional 10 years. The Council remains extremely dissatisfied with the original determination of this proposal by the WRPP. Council was of the view that the application was flawed and was at odds with good planning principles given its location at the entrance to the City in an area of likely expected future residential development.

Council is of the view that the applicant has not been able to suitably demonstrate the financial viability of the project, nor been able to demonstrate with any certainty that the site could be suitably remediated and waste appropriately managed at the end of the life cycle of the development. Council remains concerned that the site and the industrial infrastructure may be abandoned and left for Council rate payers to clean up.

Council remains of the view that the proposed development is unsuitable in this location. Orange is not considered to be in a renewable energy zone (where solar energy is more efficient and effective) as declared by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The site is also expected to be needed for future residential development and the proposal will considerably constrain urban residential expansion in an already stressed housing market in the future. The subject land is currently located in area classified as being potentially suitable for residential development under the current housing strategy. Council has a draft housing strategy that is currently on public exhibition. A final decision in relation to the future direction of a residential housing strategy for the City will not be made until the early part of 2022. A decision to extend the lifespan of an existing development of this type within an area currently identified as being potentially suitable for residential development should not be made until such time that Council has had the opportunity to finalise its housing strategy for residential development moving forward.

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Lastly, it needs to be acknowledged that the proposed solar industrial precinct continues to be met with significant community opposition. The proposal is considered to add minimal value to the local community and is not in the best interests of the community in this location. There has been no evidence provided by the proponent to date that the development will provide local employment, economic and/or social benefits.

Consequently, the Council of Orange is of the opinion that the impacts of this development are entirely unacceptable and requests that the WRPP refuse the application for the additional 10 years sought.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reg Kidd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Reg Kidd

MAYOR, ORANGE CITY COUNCIL