



FAO:  
Planning Department,  
Uttlesford District Council

Ref: UTT/22/2046/PINS  
Date: 11/08/2022

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **RE: Land at Berden Hall Farm, Ginns Road, Berden.**

Built Heritage Advice pertaining to an application for the development of a ground mounted solar farm with a generation capacity of up to 49.99MW, together with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

The application site comprises four large arable fields, to the east of the site is the Scheduled Monument The Crump (List Entry Number: 1009308). Public Rights of Way cross the site from north to south and from the east. The following designated heritage assets have the potential to be affected by the proposals:

- Church of St Nicholas, Grade I listed (list entry number: 1170264);
- Berden Hall, Grade II\* listed (list entry number: 1112468);
- Granary Northeast of Berden Hall, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1306141);
- The Crump and Former Barn (now room) adjoining to Northwest, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1112471);
- Crabbs Green Farmhouse, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1101863);
- Barn at Crabbs Green Farm, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1176566);
- White Hart Farmhouse, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1347752);
- Barn at White Hart Farm, Grade II listed (list entry number: 11765596);
- Silver Birches, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1176548);
- Longcroft, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1347751), and
- Bennills, Grade II listed (list entry number: 1101865).

The proposals have the potential to affect the setting of the identified heritage assets, therefore Historic England's *Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA Note 3) shall be referred to. As stated within the submitted Heritage Statement, the site has remained historically open agrarian land which positively contributes to the rural character and setting of the heritage assets. Furthermore, it is understood that the site historically was in the same ownership of Berden Hall therefore it is understood that there is a historic connection between the two, further contributing to the significance of the heritage asset. Several of the above-mentioned heritage assets are considered to not be impacted by the proposals due to distance, intervening development and limited visual impact.



Upon review of the submitted documents, the proposed development is considered to result in a more industrial character contrary to the prevailing rural character of the site. Whilst this impact could be mitigated, this would not remove the harm from the proposal. In particular, there are concerns regarding the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Nicholas and Berden Hall, which shares a historic connection to the site. I acknowledge that there is existing planting however this cannot be guaranteed in perpetuity and seasonal/diurnal changes must also be considered. With regards to Step 3 of HE's GPA Note 3, *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, the proposed development is considered to result in several impacts including the change to general character, views to and from the heritage assets and the experience of the heritage assets. Furthermore, there are concerns upon proposed mitigation of additional planting (woodland) which is not considered to be appropriate given that the site historically has been open agrarian land.

The proposals are considered to result in a level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Church of St Nicholas, Berden Hall and the Scheduled Monument, The Crump, Paragraph 202 of the NPPF being relevant. I suggest that this harm is towards the lowest end of the scale. This harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Muston BA (Hons) MSc  
Historic Environment Team  
Place Services

*Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter*