

**From:** Hans van Riemsdijk [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 24 August 2022 22:29  
**To:** Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Berden Hall Farm (Pelham Solar) Application number on S62A/22/0006 (and UTT/22/2046/PINS)

Application number on S62A/22/0006 (and UTT/22/2046/PINS)

I am writing to object to the proposal by Statera to construct a solar farm on 177 acres of land at Berden Hall Farm.

My name is Hans van Riemsdijk

[REDACTED]

].

The 5 reason for my objection is as follows:

**1>This is high quality Agricultural Land that the UK needs for food production – there is no evidence within the application whatsoever that the applicant has not** demonstrated that the use of high quality agricultural land is necessary. The Land is Grade 2 and 3A agricultural land and therefore classified as ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land. It is not therefore appropriate when so many alternative brown field sites are viable.

The following is pertinent:

- Uttlesford’s Policy ENV5 also says that development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will only be permitted where opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development on previously developed sites or within existing development limits. Where development of agricultural land is required, developers should seek to use areas of poorer quality except where other sustainability considerations suggest otherwise.
- As the land identified for development is high-quality agricultural land its use must be justified by the most compelling evidence.
- In the FAQ document published by the applicant on their development website: [REDACTED] the developer says the following:

**“Question: What other locations did you consider? Answer: None!**

- 19 October 2014, , **Liz Truss** (then a DEFRA Minister) said the following:

*“English farmland is some of the best in the world and I want to see it dedicated to growing quality food and crops. I do not want to see its productive potential wasted and its appearance blighted by solar farms. Farming is what our farms are for and it is what keeps our landscape beautiful. I am committed to food production in this country and it makes my heart sink to see row upon row of solar panels where once there was a field of wheat or grassland for livestock to graze. That is why I am scrapping farming subsidies for solar fields.*

*Solar panels are best placed on the 250,000 hectares of south facing commercial rooftops where they will not compromise the success of our agricultural industry”.*

- We currently import more than 40 per cent of our food, and recent threats by countries to ban exports of vaccinations have highlighted the threat that similar bans could be imposed on food if countries are themselves short of supplies in the future.
- It is predicted that we will need to produce 56 per cent more food by 2050 due to increasing populations. We have not increased food production by 56 per cent in the last 30 years, and if we continue to build on farmland we have no hope of achieving it in the next 30 years either.
- New research from the CPRE has found almost 14,500 hectares of the country’s best agricultural land has been permanently lost to development in just 12 years. The research has found that there has been a huge rise in BMV agricultural land set aside for housing and industry between 2010 and 2022, from 60 hectares to more than 6,000 hectares per year.

## **2> The site is too large and only contributes to the industrialisation of a rural area:**

The following is pertinent:

Uttlesford’s Policy ENV15 says that small scale renewable energy development schemes to meet local needs will be supported providing it can be demonstrated that they do not adversely affect i) The character of sensitive landscapes; ii) Nature conservation interests; or iii) Residential and recreational amenity

- This is not a “small scale” scheme and in the case of Uttlesford they have already granted consent for more Solar Farms than any other Essex LPA.
- The area covered by solar panels is even larger than the area which was contemplated at the time of the application to Uttlesford District Council for a Screening Opinion.
- The land identified by the applicant as the site for Berden Hall solar Farm extends to 177 acres of productive farm land.
- The visual impact of such a huge solar farm would fundamentally change the character of the area.
- The scheme will not contribute to the energy needs of local residents. There is no benefit to the local community whatsoever. Residents do not wish to be “bought off” by the offer of modest amounts of money by the farmer who owns this agricultural land. The loss of the countryside is irreplaceable.
- Local residents will not get cheaper solar energy
- There will be a loss of rural amenities such as footpaths with open views!

## **3> I am keen dog walker – I don’t want to walk through a solar farm**



- The road between Little Hadham and Berden is a small country road. At some points, it is barely wide enough to accommodate two regular cars. Cars currently need to stop in order to allow tractors to pass. It is completely unsuitable for articulated lorries or large HGVs.
- Access point off the road is simply not suitable for vehicles of this size.
- All vehicles will pass directly in front of the pre-school in Stocking Pelham so would bring into question the safety of primary school children

### **5> The applicant deliberately down-play impact on the listed buildings beside the solar farm**

- Section 16 of the NPPF is concerned with 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. It identifies heritage assets as 'an irreplaceable resource' and notes that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
- Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that where development proposals are likely to affect a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justifications.
- The impact on the heritage significance of the Berden Hall (Grade 2\* Listed) will be significant. Tithe maps dating from 1838 show that the land which is included within the solar farm site used to belong to the owner of Berden Hall (Nicholson Calvert) and that it was farmed by Isaac Hodges who lives in Berden Hall. There is clearly a close connection between the buildings and the land.
- The development will be visible from the bell tower in Berden Church (St Nicholas') which is a Grade 1 listed building. English Heritage have already raised concerns about the impact on this (and other) important historical assets in close proximity to the proposed development.
- The Scheduled monument at The Crump, the Grade II Listed The Crump and former barn (now room) adjoining to north-west will also be impacted by the development which will be visible from first floor windows of the Crump which looks West.

We sincerely hope that the planning inspectorate does not support this application, it is very clear to me that the application site has been selected in the interests of maximising profit on the scheme by its vicinity to the electrical sub-station built in the 1970's. they have demonstrated this within their evident lack of sequential testing and have perhaps ruled-out any possible Brownfield sites (which in themselves can be connected to existing overhead pylons i.e leading to the substation) I assume on the grounds that they will not make as much profit.

I would hope that we live in a country that puts society, food poverty and the conservation of our beautiful land before profit and the interest of business who have little to do with the

villages of Berden and Stocking pelham, yet without any consideration, feel it necessary to subject this upon us.

I would equally hope that the appointed planning inspector has the opportunity to visit this site so they can see the points made in this objection and see the site for themselves.

Kind regards

**hans**

