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14 April 2022

Nigel Brown
Development Control
Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
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By email: planning@uttlesford.gov.uk
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir

**Statera Energy - Proposed Solar Energy Scheme (EIA Screening Ref. UTT/21/2158/SCO)
Land Adj. Pelham Substation Park Green Lane Berden**

We refer to above awaited planning application and, having regard to the above screening opinion, we are writing to highlight the archaeology and heritage position and to ensure that the local planning authority are aware and ensure that full geophysical surveys and trial trenching is carried out before any planning application is submitted.

As part of the screening opinion, Essex County Council Place Services have highlighted the significant archaeological remains within the solar panel areas and this includes the Rookery, the 12th-13th century raised earthwork with banked ditch. This was last trenched in 1954 and the proximity and relationship to the neighbouring Crump Schedule monument is important.

Place Services have recommended an initial desk-based assessment and then ground evaluation.

Historic England similarly note the potential adverse impacts on these non-designated heritage assets and ask the District Council to get involved.

When this was queried with Statera at the recent public consultation event, Statera were unaware of the Rookery and indeed the Crump Scheduled Monument and Grade 1 and Grade II Listed Buildings.

We attach details of the Rookery and its location is shown on the attached plan (the red circle).

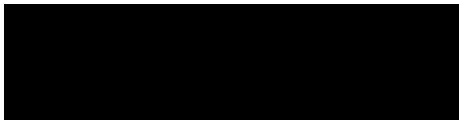
In addition, crop marks and surface finds have also indicated a second possible location within the proposed Statera site.

Are the District Council involved with Statera's heritage advisors in this regard?

Based on the above, we would request that the District Council ensure full archaeology geophysical surveys and trial trenching are undertaken **before** any planning application is submitted.

We look forward to hearing from you.

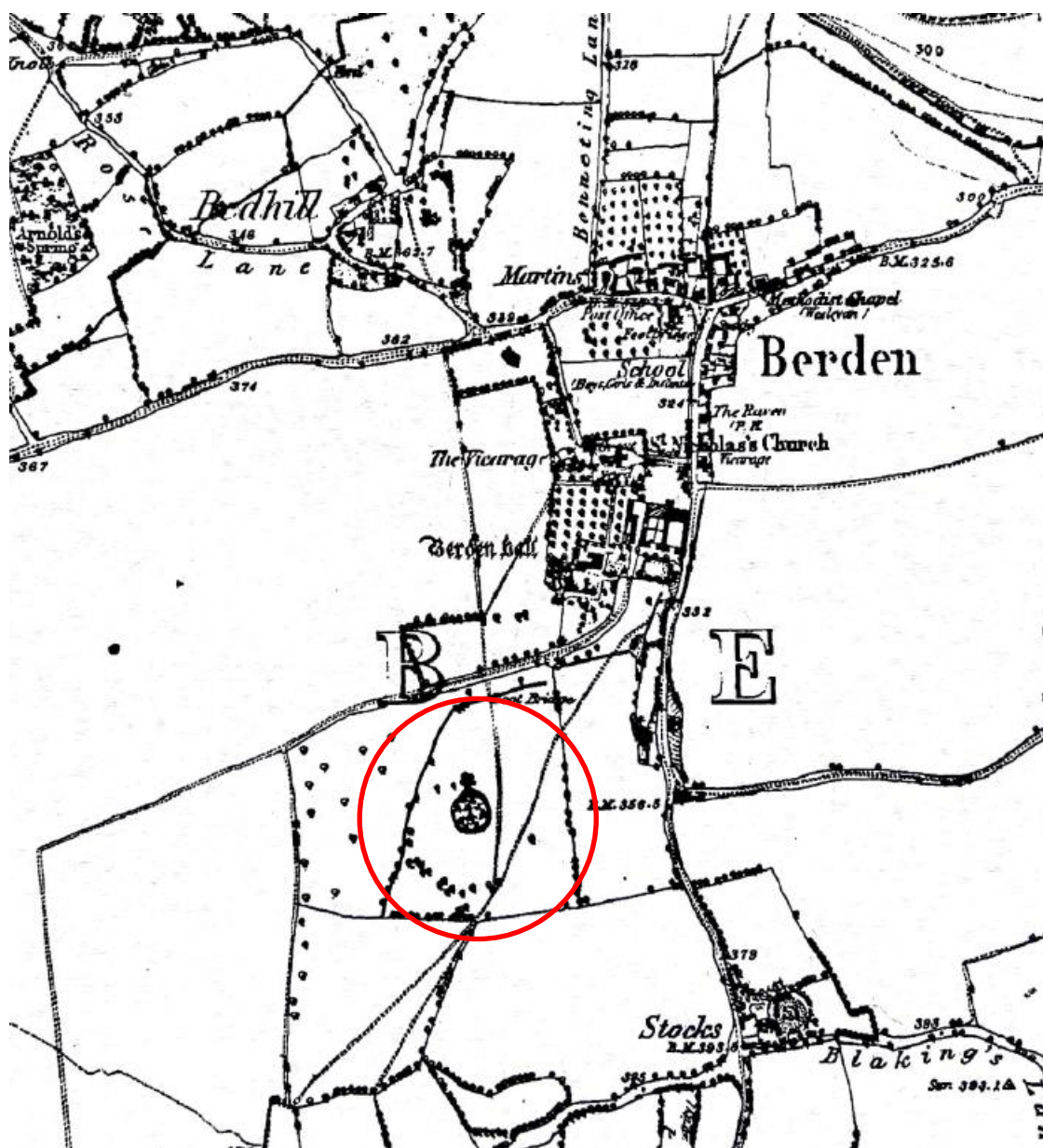
Yours faithfully



Laura Free
Clerk to Berden Parish Council

cc Cllr Janice Loughlin

Enc.



Test trenches 4 feet wide were dug along the southern and western radii. The central area was opened up and a series of test holes were dug inside the bank. The latter was examined on the north and east sides by short trenches cut across its crest. The results were not revealing.

Natural subsoil consisted of blue clay with chalk, above which was a foot to eighteen inches of light brown clay, capped with a foot of topsoil. As is usual in such cases, it was difficult to say precisely when undisturbed soil had been reached or where the original turf line lay below the bank. Faint indications in the southern trench seemed to show that this lay about a foot to eighteen inches below present ground level in the centre.

Central Area (Figs. 2-3).

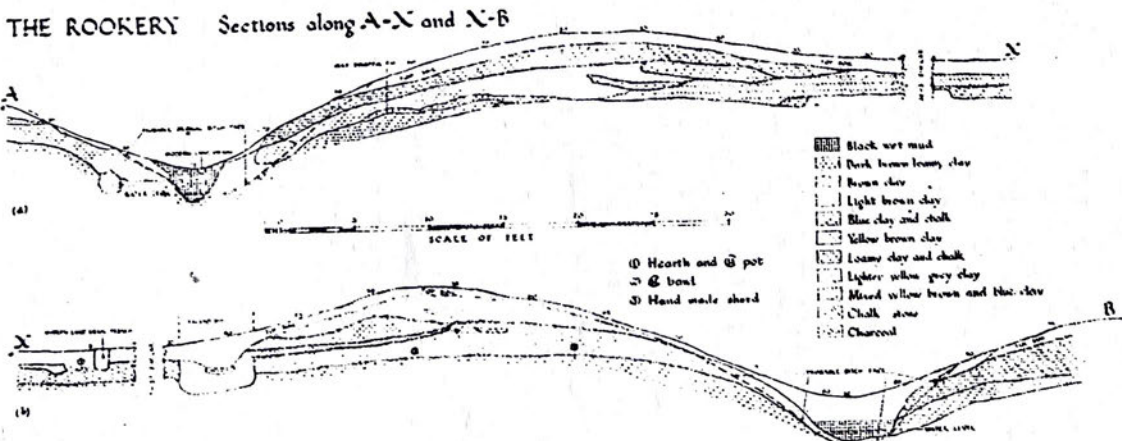
Five feet south of the estimated centre was a small hearth of blackish-grey, clayey loam with burnt clay, measuring 2 feet 6 inches by 18 inches, at a depth of 18 inches, just below topsoil and scooped out of the blue and brown subsoil (Fig. 3b). On it lay the inverted remains of a cooking-pot, made of harsh, buff-brown, gritty ware with a sagging base. The heavily moulded rim with slight internal beading is characteristic of the 13th century¹ (Fig. 4.1). Associated with the pot were the base sherds of another vessel of thicker ware, less harsh than the cooking-pot and redder in colour, also of this date. Thirteen feet north-east of the hearth a fragment of coarse, buff-brown pottery, apparently hand-made, was found just below topsoil.

The remainder of the central area revealed nothing of interest. There were no stonework, post-holes or other signs of occupation.

The Bank (Fig. 3a. and b).

The bank was sectioned in two places down to natural blue clay with chalk. Its composition in general showed the confused stratification to be expected when the spoil from a ditch is thrown up haphazard. In the southern trench (Fig. 3b) the old turf line appeared to show as a line of blue clay below the inner half of the bank, about 18 inches above natural. South of the crest, the rim sherd of a 12th century bowl in reddish-brown gritty ware, was found in brown clay, 6 inches above natural² (Fig. 4.2). (2 on Figs. 2 and 3b.) A single sherd of reddish ware, flecked with flint, $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick, bearing horizontal girth lines and apparently hand-made, was found just north of the crest, 6 inches above natural and 9 inches below the presumed old turf line. (3 on Figs. 2 and 3b.) It was probably part of a

¹ Compare a somewhat similar cooking-pot from Bungay Castle, Suffolk. *Proc. Suffolk Inst. of Arch.*, vol. xiii, p. 285.



roofing tile. A few flecks of charcoal were found below the crest at a depth of about 1 foot 9 inches.

Charcoal flecks were also found west of the crest and just above natural in the western trench which otherwise revealed nothing of interest (Fig. 3a).

A careful search was made for post-holes both on the crest of the bank and on the outer scarp, but with the very doubtful possibility at

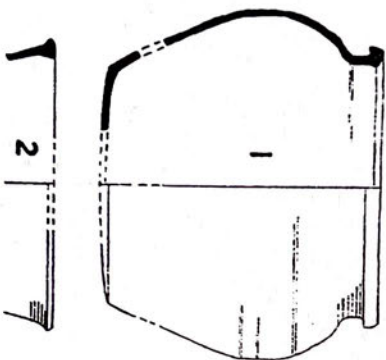


FIG. 4.

62 feet west in the western trench, where natural blue clay showed a shallow depression, no indications were found.

The Ditch (Fig. 3a and b).

The ditch proved to have been originally 2 feet 6 inches deep, giving an original depth of between 5 and 6 feet below the presumed original ground level. Its centre was filled with some 2 feet of wet, black, loamy silt. Water level was reached 6 inches above the original ditch bottom. Nothing of interest was recovered.

The nature of the earthwork.

The finds, already described, from the adjacent Crump suggest that the latter was a Norman ring motte and it seemed reasonable to suppose that the Rookery, which looked very similar, was another example. Nothing however was found to strengthen this supposition. The apparent absence of any traces of stonework, post-holes, occupation

level, other than the small central hearth, or means of entry through the bank, made it hard to believe that the place was ever either a regular dwelling site or a cattle enclosure. On the other hand the almost certainly hand-made sherd found near the centre gave some evidence of ancient occupation.

The central hearth with associated cooking-pot indicated light occupation in the 13th century, and the rim sherd of a medieval bowl found near the base of the southern bank suggests a 12th century date for the construction of the earthwork.

From later times, the only known record is contained in a conveying map of 1602 in which the earthwork is shown, somewhat sketchily, as a rectangle.

The earthwork has now been destroyed.

1881

