

**S62A/22/0006 Berden Hall Farm**

**Development Hearing 9/03/2023**

**Uttlesford Council Offices  
Saffron Walden  
Essex.**

**Sarah Wright (neighbour)**

Good morning / afternoon. I am Sarah Wright, a neighbour to Berden and Stocking Pelham villages.

I am here to object to this application on the grounds of local and national interest. This application diminishes our resources more than it has to offer. It leaves us worse off in many respects, but one that is undeniable and dangerous.

### **Food Security**

“almost 14,500 hectares of the country’s best agricultural land has been permanently lost to development over the past 12 years……”

And the highest proportion of agricultural land lost to development is in our own East of England region, with over 3,200 hectares of the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land lost ……….”

We here, and more importantly our Inspectors and councillors are the last bastion between us and a folly that will negatively affect future generations. Our finite resource for growing food should NOT be up for negotiation when there are many better, affordable and plausible alternatives, like the 250,000 hectares of south facing commercial roof in the UK. If used this could provide 50% of the UKs electricity. The UK Warehouse Association study says that roofs on warehouses should be used to produce 15GW of solar energy.

The compaction of the ground, the introduction of ballast for access routes and car parks, the chemical leaching, **the removal of top soil** will render our land for food irreparably damaged. These installations are being applied for across the UK on our farmland. There are a further 66 groups, to my knowledge, like Protect the Pelhams across the country lobbying government to save our best farmland. The nation is only 18% self-sufficient in fruit, 55% in fresh vegetables and 71% in potatoes, for both vegetables and potatoes this has fallen by 16% in the last 20 years. We stand to push ourselves further into food insecurity and our children do not know it. Many of us here are metaphorically holding the hands of our children and their children at a cliff edge, desperately pleading with our governmental representatives to protect the future food resources of us all.

Solar energy is the least efficient of any renewable energy only working at 11% compared to all others. Let’s not lose an essential precious resource, our best land and soil, to a low performing industrial installation.

There are turning points in History, with hind sight, we would change. We have the luxury of foresight at this juncture. Intelligently we can have both renewable energy, including solar, and our best growing land. We need, and I do not use the word “need” lightly in this instance, to make the very best decisions for ourselves, our communities and future generations at this point. What we stand to lose in this development far outweighs any net gain.

**Please reject this application.**

Thank you

**Appendix:**

“almost 14,500 hectares of the country’s best agricultural land has been permanently lost to development over the past 12 years……And the highest proportion of agricultural land lost to development is in our own East of England region, with over 3200 hectares of the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land lost to development.” **CPRE study. The countryside charity. Hertfordshire. 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**UK Warehouse Association study September 2022**

“250,000 Hectares of south facing commercial roofing”. **Building Research Establishment. Centre of building science in the UK.**

“ The nation is only 18% self-sufficient....”**The Grocer Henry Sandercock 12<sup>th</sup> Feb’ 2021**