

[REDACTED] >  
Sent: 02 September 2022 18:12

To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Subject: Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/22/0006 Berden Hall Farm, Ginns Road, Berden

Dear Sir or Madam,

Section 62A Planning Application, S62A/22/0006, Berden Hall Farm, Ginns Road, Berden

I am writing to oppose the above planning application.

The proposed solar 'farm' would see a huge swathe of productive, Best and Most Versatile farmland taken out of food production. At a time when worldwide attention is focusing on food insecurity it is more important than ever for UK farmland to be reserved for food production, not covered in inefficient photovoltaic panels. The developer has not considered alternative sites and has therefore failed to produce the most compelling evidence required to justify the use of this land.

Installing 100,368 solar panels in the countryside does not enhance the natural environment. The countryside is an amenity not only for those living there but also to visitors. This amenity should be protected.

There are several footpaths in the area that would be adversely affected.

In this undulating countryside solar panels will be impossible to hide and would be an eyesore for the next 40 years, which is not 'temporary'

as the Secretary of State has pointed out. Solar 'farms' do not belong in the close proximity of rural villages. They spoil the area by changing its character from rural to industrial.

Solar energy is not as readily available in the UK as wind. The government's Net Zero strategy favours off-shore wind and nuclear energy production over solar. It would seem wrong to approve this application when the emphasis in energy production is moving more and more towards off shore wind and nuclear energy. Solar panels are best reserved for brownfield sites and roof tops.

The fact that there is an existing substation that the developer can connect to in order to maximise profits should not influence a planning decision. Paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework dealing with the natural environment states clearly that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. That is something this development would fail to do.

Whilst this application is for land in the village of Berden the site is next door to Stocking Pelham which will be affected to the same degree if not more. 17% of the land within the Stocking Parish curtilage is already taken up with industrial use – the electricity substation and the existing battery plant. This massive new industrial development right on the doorstep of the village will dramatically extend the balance of industrial land, altering the rural nature of the community.

This kind of creeping industrialisation is against the spirit and letter of all rural planning policies such as VILL3 of the East Herts plan, as well as national planning policy Paragraph 155.

Solar panels do not belong and are not wanted in the countryside.

There are myriad unproductive sites for hosting solar panels. The countryside should be protected for its own sake and good quality arable land should most definitely not be compromised. The English countryside is a national heritage asset not to be squandered. I urge you to dismiss this application.

Best regards,  
Riikka Berthoud

