

**PELHAM SPRING SOLAR FARM
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
TECHNICAL APPENDICES**

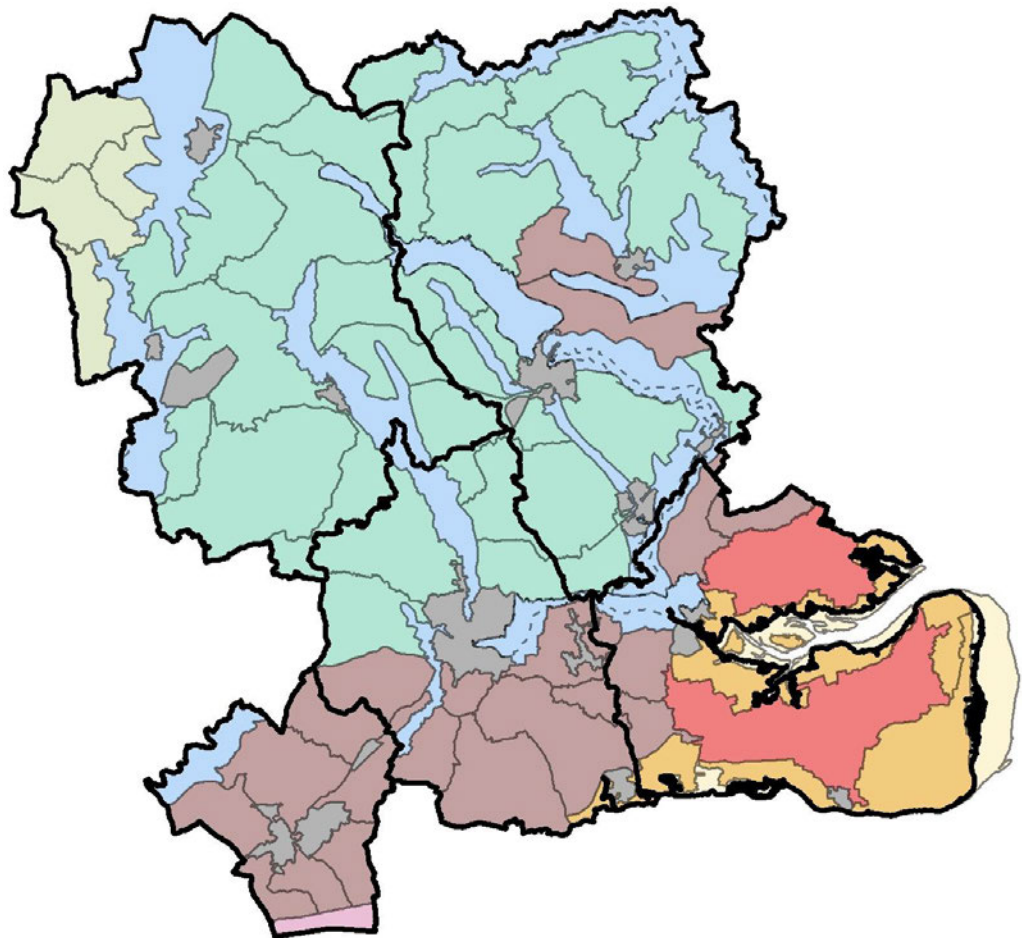
**APPENDIX 6.4 – EXTRACT FROM BRAINTREE,
BRENTWOOD, CHELMSFORD, MALDON AND
UTTLESFORD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENTS**

On behalf of Low Carbon Solar Park 6 Limited

Date: December 2022



**BRAINTREE, BRENTWOOD, CHELMSFORD,
MALDON AND UTTLESFORD
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS**



September 2006

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

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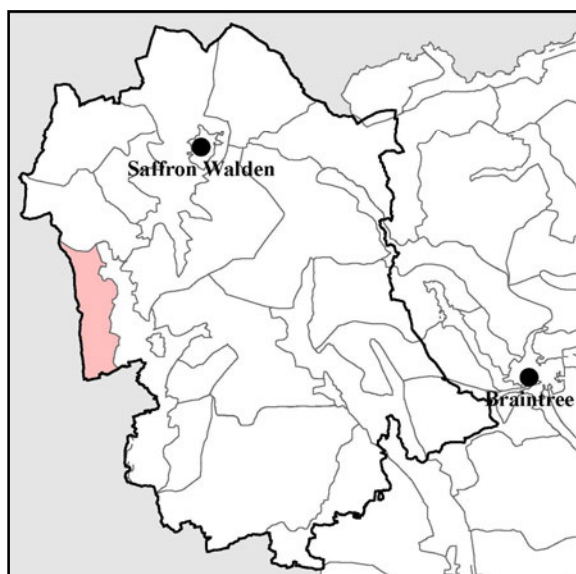
7.4.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Strongly rolling landform of broad roundbacked ridges
- Large scale arable farmland
- Distinctive elevated, expansive and generally open character
- Panoramic views from ridgetops
- Dispersed blocks of woodland and isolated copses
- Sparse settlement pattern, small linear villages alongside stream courses, and hamlets with greens

7.4.2 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Areas:

- H1 - Elmdon Chalk Upland
- H2 - Arkesden Chalk Upland
- H3 - Langley Chalk Upland
- H4 - Berden and Farnham Chalk Upland

H4 BERDEN AND FARNHAM CHALK UPLAND

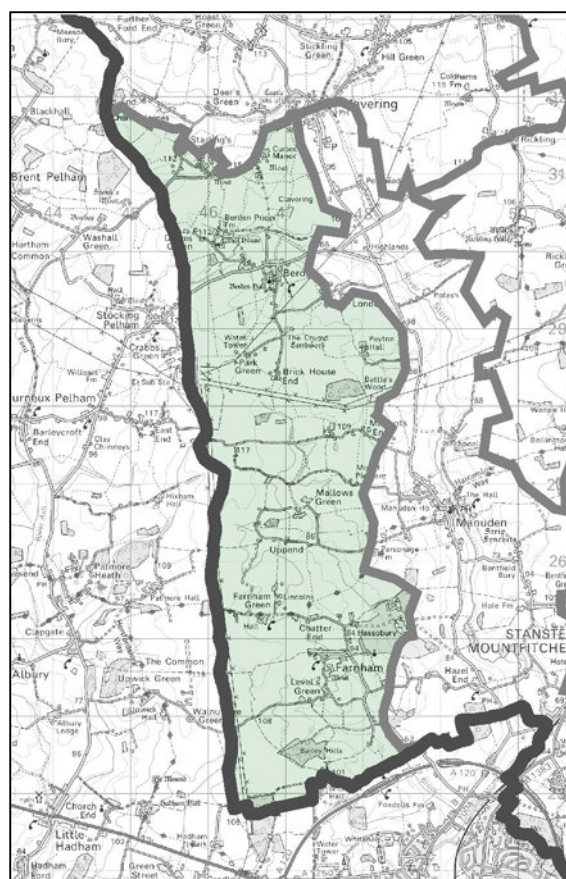


Key Characteristics

- Broad undulating upland slopes that flatten at the highest elevations.
- Distinctly elevated, open, arable fields.
- Field patterns mainly regular, with large farms and becoming smaller and more organic in shape in the valleys and around villages.
- Scrubby, often fragmented hedgerows or scattered tree groups, with distant blocks of trees framing views, particularly towards the middle and southern part of the area, where it is dissected by Bourn Brook.
- A complex array of pylons leading to electricity substation near Berden dominates views in the high plateau.
- Few roads; sense of emptiness and openness.

Overall Character

This character area extends from Ford End in the north to the environs of Farnham in the south. The county boundary with Hertfordshire lies in the west and the Stort Valley to the east. Around Berden the upland ridges are broad and almost flat, moving southwards the slopes become more rolling and wooded. It is an extremely varied character area, with the open wide vistas on the higher ground contrasting with the more intimate feel of the steep slopes descending to the Bourne Brook. The field pattern varies in the same way - rather large and regular in the northern and middle part of the area, becoming more irregular and smaller in scale towards the south. Mostly arable farmland on this chalky boulder clay, there is some pasture for horses, particularly near villages. Occasionally post- and-rail fences enclose fields, as well as the more typical fragmented hedgerows and scrub-lined ditches. Rural lanes running east to west divide the area almost in thirds, with some areas quite inaccessible except



via private tracks. This adds to its sense of remoteness. There are quite a few pedestrian footpaths crisscrossing the area, and a double row of pylons dominates the skyline on the plateau outside Berden, where there is also a highly visible national grid electricity station. Tree blocks provide a certain sense of enclosure in the centre of the area, and this more intimate sense increases approaching the steep slopes near the Bourn Brook. There are five patches of ancient woodland scattered across the area (see below). Several springs scattered over the area as well. The changing undulations of the landform characterize this area, and the sense of moving up and down, in and out from closed to open, expansive views. Infrequent settlements offer variety and interest with their colour-washed plaster buildings and the occasional red brick outbuildings. Farm buildings vary from medium to large. The texture of this landscape changes with the landform; moving from smooth expansive fields to winding lanes to steeply sloping mature woodland. Away from the A11, which can be heard in the distance on the western fringes, it has places of great tranquillity.

Visual Characteristics

- Dramatic views of steeply sloping fields and small church above Bourne Brook.
- Highly visible double row of pylons and electricity generating station outside Berden.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by pre-18th century irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older, with a number of small areas of pre-18th century unenclosed common. The settlement pattern is very widely dispersed, comprising isolated farms and a few hamlets. Hassobury Park, outside Farnham, forms a conspicuous landscape block within the area.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 10 sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Battles Wood CWS (c. 100ha), comprising ancient woodland.
- Bailey's Wood CWS (c. 100 ha) comprising ancient and semi-natural woodland.
- Three small CWSs comprising part of Oxbury Wood, Ley Wood and part of Bloodhounds Wood.
- Five small CWSs comprising unimproved grassland and wetland habitats including: Arnold's Spring, Pelham Centre Meadow, Park Green, Farnham Green, Farnham Churchyard.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the Bourne Brook from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from surrounding valley side and farmland plateau areas.
- Past loss of hedgerows and decline in hedgerow management.
- Potential loss of hedgerows and field pattern due to the further introduction of intensive agricultural practices.
- Pressure from increased traffic on rural lanes and erosion of verges.
- Pressure from expansion of village settlements which may be detrimental to landscape character.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings on the higher ground, which may be visually intrusive.
- Potential for new development at the northern edge of the plateau which would be visually intrusive to views within this character area.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include small patches of woodland (some of which are ancient) and several springs, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The open nature of the skyline on the ridges of this upland landscape is visually sensitive to new development, which may be visible within panoramic views across the plateau. The overall sense of tranquillity within the character area is also sensitive to change and potential new

development. There is a sense of historic integrity or continuity, resulting from a widely dispersed historic settlement pattern and enclosed meadows within the valley of the River Stort. Overall, this character area has moderate to-high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Restore - seek to reinforce and/or reinstate historic landscape patterns and features that contribute to sense of place and time depth, by repairing distinctive elements that have been lost or degraded.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern, especially scale and density, and that use of materials, and especially colour, is appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Encourage the appropriate use of colour as well as tree planting to mitigate the visually intrusive effects of large modern farm buildings.
- Small scale development should be carefully sited in relation to existing farm buildings.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Strengthen and enhance hedgerows with hawthorn where gappy and depleted to emphasize the existing landscape character.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important landscape, historical and nature conservation sites.
- Conserve and restore important areas of unimproved grassland as important landscape, historical and nature conservation sites.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Strengthen and enhance species-rich grassland and verges on thin chalk soils to promote plant diversity.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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