

[REDACTED]

DUNCAN CHALK

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05/02/2023

Dear Sir / Madam

**Objection to Solar Farm on Land East of Pelham substation, Maggots End Manuden - Application number: S62A/2022/0011**

I am writing to express my deep concern re the proposed development called Pelham Spring Solar Farm for the reasons below

- 1 Environmental Impact
- 2 Loss of Agricultural Lan
- 3 Financial Impact
- 4 Consistency of Planning Decisions

**1 Environmental Impact**

Despite the developer Low Carbon's glossy brochures and marketing materials, the reality of what this development is 196 acres of industrial landscape, predominantly glass, steel & concrete with panels over 3M high, all surrounded by a 2 M high wire fence, with danger of death signs, CCTV, Industrial Lighting & battery pack buildings.

A Solar "Farm" looks like in practice is more akin to a Prison Compound than a farm. No amount of "beehives" or "wildflowers" can make up for this eyesore of a proposal and the harm this will cause to the local environment.

If a 196 acres housing development were proposed, whilst not welcome, it would be considerably more preferable than this industrial estate. A housing development at least has roads we can access, neighbours to visit, and the public amenities associated with a large development.

[REDACTED]

If planning for 196 acres of housing was put forward, it would likely be rejected – as certainly would a 196 acres industrial estate – which is in effect what this is – and as such this solar “Farm” should be rejected.

## **2 Loss of Agricultural Land**

No one is disputing the need to take action on climate change. It's worth recalling that when wind farms were first developed in the UK, they were nearly all onshore. However, despite the higher costs, currently nearly all UK windfarms are developed offshore, as the realization of the true impact of onshore windfarms to the UK's upland landscape became apparent. Windfarms at least are low density, whilst a Solar Farm carpets virtually the entire site with glass & steel. Surely it is better to let the UK focus on wind farms and let Solar farms be developed on land in Southern Europe and North Africa where it is cheaper, sunnier without the loss of scarce high quality agricultural land?

## **3 Financial Impact**

I and many other residents commute daily into London. It's at least a 2 hour round trip, and whilst the locality may not have shops, bars, restaurants or good transport links, what it does have is beautiful countryside. If you take away the countryside, the whole rationale for living where we do is removed.

Whilst it is hard to quantify the impact in monetary terms of lost prime agricultural land, or the impact to people's mental well-being, or to the damage done to the environment, we can at least make a fair estimate of the loss in value to people's property.

All European studies have shown a clear negative impact to house prices caused by Solar “Farms”. If this was a road being proposed, the government would compensate home owners for the loss in the value of their homes. It's a similar story for a railway, and similarly if we lived in many other countries, such as Denmark, we would be compensated for financial loss suffered from the Solar Farm.

In short you can debate the size of the impact, but it's likely to be significant for those properties within a few hundred meters the perimeter fence,

Quite why residents are expected to in effect subsidize this development, to the tune of several million pounds in aggregate– and this is without the costs of entailed in being forced to move elsewhere: between them this can constitute a substantial portion of people life savings up in smoke.

So surely the whole point of the planning process is to assess the costs and benefits of the proposal across the whole community. From the above, if we do take into account the costs borne by the residents of the development, the case for this development just does not stack up.

#### **4 Consistency of Planning Decisions**

I currently live in a Battles hall Barns, a development of 5 barns that sit in the curtilage of Battles Hall, a grade II listed property. Over the last 4 years I have submitted several planning applications in keeping with the existing buildings to make minor changes to the fenestration, including adding Velux Windows and patio doors – which have been rejected due to the historical sensitivity of the site.

UTT/21/0392/LB. & UTT/21/0391/HHF (refused)

UTT/20/3222/HHF & UTT/20/3223/LB (refused)

UTT/20/0937/HHF (refused)

UTT/19/2106/HHF (refused)

UTT/18/3136/HHF (refused)

If the proposed Solar development is approved, it would seem to me there is one rule for the big corporates, and one rule for the householder, one rule for those with money and one for those without.

How can I be consistently refused planning for a window, which overlooks no one, has always had the support of the neighbours, and that I has not had a single objection, and yet 150,000 solar panels is considered to be fine? I have listed some of the reasons given below for being refused planning.

*“harm to the heritage asset caused by the scheme is considered to outweigh the public benefit”*

*“The proposed rooflight will adversely change the experience of the barn, it would be overly domestic by design”*

*“elevation faces towards fields and wider rural surrounds which responds to the agricultural origins of the barn”*

*“the proposed would also negatively contribute to the setting of Battles Hall and the Scheduled Monument “*

How can converting 196 acres of prime agricultural land into an Industrial estate not be considered to negatively contribute to the setting of Battles hall?

There would be absolutely no chance of me getting planning permission for a single solar panel at Battles Hall so how could 150,000 solar panels be ok?

This application has been rejected by Uttlesford Council, and for good reason. The planning Inspectorate should come to the same conclusion.

Sincerely,

# Duncan Chalk



