

From: Katherine Armstrong [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 February 2023 11:50
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to restate my objection to the application to construct a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar arrays together with (among other things) battery storage, inverter cabins, a substation, fencing and CCTV camera on land near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden CM23 1BJ.

My name is Katherine Anne Armstrong. I live at [REDACTED]

The reasons for my objections are as follows:

In the UK we already produce little more than half the food we need to feed our population. If the development goes ahead, good quality farmland will be lost to food production for at least 40 years.

At a time when the government has acknowledged that the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, I am concerned about the devastating consequences of the development for the rich variety of wildlife in this peaceful, unspoiled area of countryside. The proposal, to build on 196 acres of farmland and to surround an area of ancient woodland, takes no account of the delicate ecosystems of this area and the endangered species known to live there, including great crested newts, whose presence has been detected in five sites close to the proposed solar farm, as well as yellowhammers and skylarks both of which are red list farmland birds and UK BAP protected bird species. I have seen these birds in the area concerned, as well as green woodpeckers, lesser whitethroats and blackcaps in the hedges bordering the fields.

The land in question lies close to an extremely important scheduled monument The Crump and many listed buildings. Archaeological remains have been found in the majority of the fields, including cropmarks indicating occupation in medieval times. The heritage report submitted by the developers minimises the value of these heritage assets and their photos in many cases mislead, underplaying the beauty of the listed buildings and their settings.

I walk along East End Lane regularly, and if the development goes ahead my enjoyment will be ruined, with adverse consequences for my physical and mental health. There is no other countryside as quiet and unspoiled within walking distance of my house, and to reach its equivalent I would have to travel by car, which would add a carbon footprint to my walks and contribute to air pollution as well as the cost of petrol for me personally. It is very important to me to live as far as possible in a way which minimises my impact on the environment, and the development would force me to choose between driving more than I do currently, or exercising less.

Local roads are narrow and winding, and unsuitable for large construction vehicles. These will also produce noise and pollution and significantly reduce the extent to which walkers, runners and cyclists are able to use the area for recreation and exercise.

The government does not support large scale solar development on such areas of unspoiled countryside. In 2015 Eric Pickles stated the government's opposition, and in June 2021 his point was repeated by Eddie Hughes MP, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Sir Oliver Heald MP, whose constituency borders the proposal site, has many times urged the government to prioritise high-quality farmland for food production over ill-thought out solar developments which industrialise our countryside.

I trust you will listen to the voices of the many local people who are aghast at the prospect of this development on an area that, although close to town, and not too many miles from London, is peaceful, beautiful, rich in wildlife and heritage assets, including archaeological remains, and valued beyond measure by those who use it for exercise, recreation and sheer enjoyment of its lovely views.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Armstrong