

From: Claire Russell [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 March 2023 17:21

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

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

I am writing to object 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 cameras on land near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden CM23 1BJ

My name is Claire Russell and I live at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the Natural Environment) states that: Planning ... decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

Uttlesford's Planning Policy S7 (The Countryside) also states that: In the countryside, which will be protected for its own sake, planning permission will only be given for development that needs to take place there, or is appropriate to a rural area. This will include infilling in accordance with paragraph 6.13 of the Housing Chapter of the Plan. There will be strict control on new building. Development will only be permitted if its appearance protects or enhances the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set or there are special reasons why the development in the form proposed needs to be there.

A large portion of the land selected by Low Carbon runs parallel to Brick House End. The site then curves round to the West completely engulfing Brick House Farm. As an historian I am interested in the historic landscape and note that many of the fields that Low Carbon wishes to cover in solar panels have not changed for centuries.

I attach (as Annex 1) an extract from 1777 Chapman & Andre Map which shows both the Brick House, Battles Hall and Peyton Hall. The map also shows the drovers lane which connects Brick House end with Peyton Hall. This is Blakings Lane which runs alongside Zones 1 and 3 of the proposed solar farm. Views from Blakings Lane will be changed beyond recognition if the solar farm is built.

The second attachment (Annex 2) is an extract from the Ordnance Survey map (Essex Sheet XIII) which was published in 1881 following surveys undertaken between 1876 to 1877. For comparison I also attach an extract from the site layout submitted by Low Carbon as part of their planning application (Annex 3) and an aerial map showing the site (Annex 4).

It is particularly striking that the layout of the fields adjacent to Brick House End shown on the 1881 map is virtually unchanged today. The 1881 map also shows both Pump Spring (which will be surrounded by the proposed development) and Battles Wood which Natural England lists as an Ancient Semi-Natural woodland. The Woodland Trust notes that: "Ancient woods are areas of woodland that have persisted since 1600 in England and Wales - this is when maps started to be reasonably accurate so we can tell that these areas have had tree cover for hundreds of years"

The Woodland Trust also notes that: "Ancient woods are our richest and most complex terrestrial habitat in the UK and they are home to more threatened species than any other. Centuries of undisturbed soils and accumulated decaying wood have created the perfect place for communities of fungi and invertebrates. Other specialist species of insects, birds and mammals rely on ancient woodlands".

It seems to me that a landscape which has not changed for centuries is, by definition, an historic landscape which should be protected from development. The proposed development is not "appropriate to the local area". Nor can it reasonably be argued that the Low Carbon's development will "protect or enhance the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set". There is no special reason why the "development in the form proposed needs to be" here. Planning permission for this development should be refused.

I would like to register my wish to speak at any hearing which is convened by the Planning Inspector in connection with this application.

Yours faithfully

Claire Russell