

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 January 2024 17:52
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Objection to Berden Hall Solar Farm (S62A/22/0006)

Objection of planning application in relation to land at Berden Hall Farm, Dewes Green Road, Berden (S62A/22/0006)

Sent from:
Mr and Mrs RIW McConnell

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Date: 02 January 2024

Dear Major Casework Team,
We are writing to object against the above planning application for the following reasons:

The proposal is for a large-scale, industrial-style development in an area of open countryside including a number of public footpaths and public bridleways. This covers an area used by walkers and dog-walkers.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has recently changed (December 2023) to give greater importance to Best and Most Versatile land in order to safeguard domestic food production and protect national food security. Berden Hall Solar Farm would take 133 acres of BMV land out of food production for at least 40 years (> 70% of the proposal Site is Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land).

The proposed development would cause harm to historic and listed buildings in the area, including:

- The Crump ringwork is a scheduled ancient monument
- St Nicholas Church Berden is a Grade I listed building
- Berden Hall is a Grade II listed building

There must be consistency in planning decisions, and the refusal by the Planning Inspectorate to grant permission for Pelham Spring Solar Farm (PSSF), in close proximity to the Berden Hall Solar Farm site, is therefore important. The Planning Inspector, Mr Callum Parker, argued that PSSF would erode the agricultural landscape and constitute industrial infrastructure that would be present for c. 40 years, which is not temporary. The scheme would fail to preserve the setting of the listed buildings and other heritage assets. Clearly, many of the factors which led to the refusal of Pelham Spring Solar Farm are also relevant to Berden Hall Solar Farm

The revised proposals are contrary to Policy S7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (LP) which (broadly) states that planning permission will only be given where a development is needed in a particular location, is appropriate and protects and enhances the landscape character:

- Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan states that the government seeks large scale ground-mount solar deployment across the UK, looking for development mainly **on brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land**. Wherever it references solar energy, the Plan focuses on Rooftop Solar, not Ground-Mounted Solar.

- Recent planning decisions highlight the importance of a proper site selection exercise to identify poorest land. The Applicant did not perform such an exercise when selecting the proposal site for a large-scale industrial-style development on land currently used for food production.

Yours sincerely
Mr and Mrs McConnell