

From: peter jester [REDACTED]

Sent: 02 January 2024 18:27

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

Subject: Land at Berden Hall Farm, Dewes Green Road, Berden, reference number S62A/22/0006 -
OBJECTION

I wish to record my objection to the above application, on the following grounds:

- The application **erroneously** refers to Berden Hall, Berden Hall Farm and Dewes Green Road, yet is **not** situated either at historic Berden Hall, Berden Hall Farm, **nor does the Applicant have the owners' permission to use the name of either Berden Hall nor Berden Hall Farm**, and **has no boundary on Dewes Green Road**
- The proposed development would take approximately 180 acres of farmland out of food production for at least 40 years - 72% of the proposal Site is Best and Most Versatile land (BMV). **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recently changed in December 2023 to give much greater importance to BMV land in order to safeguard domestic food production and protect national food security.** Berden Hall Solar Farm would take about 130 acres of BMV land out of food production for some 40+ years
- There would be considerable negative effects on landscape and visual amenities. This is green belt open countryside, and a number of public rights of way would be impacted including several well used footpaths
- The proposal is for alien, large-scale, industrial-style development in an area of greenfield and open countryside where there has been no equivalent development to date
- **Consistency in planning decisions is important**, 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 a highly material consideration. The Planning Inspector, Mr Callum Parker, argued that PSSF would erode the agricultural landscape and constitute industrial infrastructure that would be present for at least 40 years, which is not temporary. The scheme would fail to preserve the setting of several star graded listed buildings and other heritage assets, including the Crump

scheduled ancient monument. Clearly, **many of the factors which led to the refusal of PSSF are also very relevant to Berden Hall Solar Farm Application**

- The 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. **There is also increased emphasis in the NPPF on ensuring that renewable energy is located at the point of consumption**. Developers can already connect to the grid via the high voltage overhead cable network, so **Statera's claim that solar developments need to be in the vicinity of the Pelham Sub Station is therefore erroneous**
- 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. The proposals are also contrary to para 174 (now 180) of the NPPF for similar reasons
- In November 2023 the government announced changes to permitted development rights to enable more homeowners and businesses to install solar panels on their roofs without going through the planning system, thereby confirming that **government policy is to support the deployment of solar on already developed land rather than greenfield sites**
- Recent planning decisions highlight the importance of a proper site selection exercise to identify and prioritise the **poorest** land. The Applicant, Statera, did not perform any such exercise when selecting the proposed site for a large-scale industrial-style development on land currently used for food production, which is contrary to ENV5 of the LP. **The Applicant has therefore failed to produce "compelling evidence" to justify the selection of this site**

Regards

Peter Jester

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]