



Historic England

Mr Shaun Greaves
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Direct Dial: 07554 437321

Our ref: P01450135

5 January 2022

Dear Mr Greaves

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND TO THE NORTH AND EAST OF GREAT WYMONDLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE
Application No. 21/03380/FP**

Thank you for your letter of 17 December 2021 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The significance of the historic environment

The historic environment is a finite and non-renewable environmental resource which includes designated heritage assets, non-designated archaeology and built heritage, historic landscapes and unidentified sites of historic and/or archaeological interest. It is a rich and diverse part of England's cultural heritage and makes a valuable contribution to our cultural, social and economic life.

A solar farm in this location would have an impact upon a number of designated heritage assets and their settings in and around the site. There are no designated built heritage or archaeological assets within the red line boundary of the site. Designated assets within a 1km radius of the site include 2 x conservation areas; 2 x scheduled monuments; 4 highly-graded (II*/I) listed buildings.

The proposals and their impact on the historic environment

The proposed development site comprises two areas of land either side of Graveley Lane, that are currently in agricultural use equating to approximately 80 hectares.

The proposal is the construction and operation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays and battery storage together with associated development, including inverter cabins, switchgear building, access, fencing, and landscaping.



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We note the accompanying *Heritage Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* which assess the built heritage, archaeological and landscape within a 2km radius of the boundaries of the site. We consider the area of study to be contextually proportionate for this sensitive location.

All of the structures at the site would be single-storey in height and any intervisibility would be mitigated to some extent by way of existing hedgerows and when the proposed screen planting matures. The solar panels would be laid out in straight south-facing arrays from east to west across the field enclosures.

The racks would respond to topography but there would typically be a gap of 3-4m between each row of arrays and the maximum top height of the solar panels would be 3m. We also note that a buffer zone of 6m is proposed as part of the layout between the edge of the solar panels and the perimeter fencing.

The solar panel modules would be made of PVs which are blue, grey or black in colour and constructed of anodized aluminium alloy.

We consider that intervisibility between the site and the various heritage assets is limited due to the local topography and existing vegetation, with only limited glimpses available from certain areas.

Policy context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 189).

Paragraph 199 reminds us that that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation and the more important that asset, the greater that weight should be, paragraph 199. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Any harm to, or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification, (paragraph 200).

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 202).

Setting is then defined in the Framework as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.

Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset and may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'.

Further guidance (paragraph 13) of the Planning Practice Guidance states that local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change when assessing any application for development that may affect the setting of a heritage asset.





Historic England's position

Having considered the documentation submitted with the application, we conclude that the proposed development would have some limited impact upon the setting of nearby heritage assets, and we judge that this would equate to a level of harm that would be less than substantial in NPPF terms.

We would therefore have no objections should your authority be minded to approve the application.

Recommendation

On balance we would have no objections on heritage grounds should your authority be minded to approve the application.

We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

You should also bear in mind section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Neville Doe

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