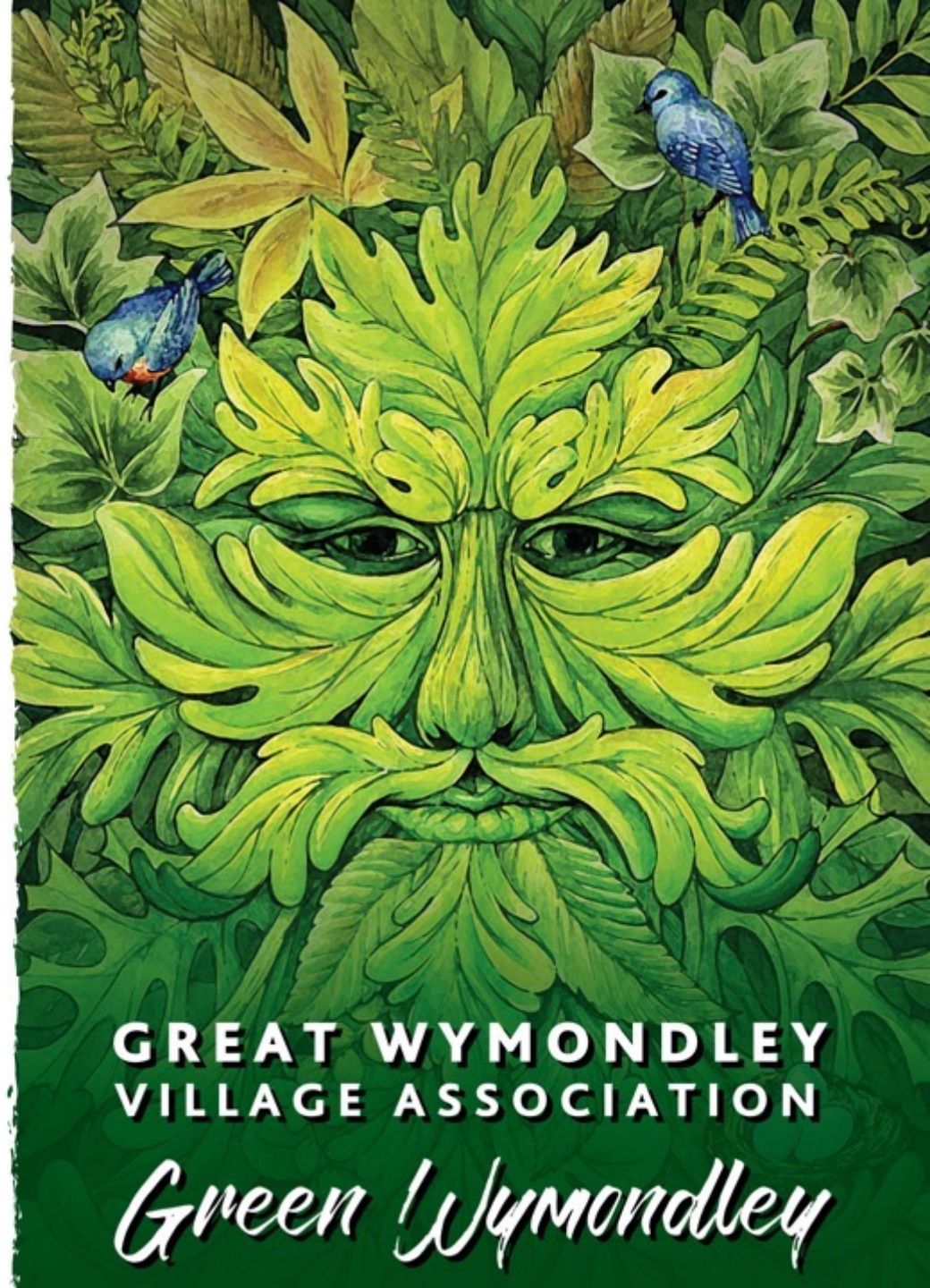


**SAY NO**

TO

**SOLAR  
HARM**

IN GREAT WYMONDLEY



**GREAT WYMONDLEY  
VILLAGE ASSOCIATION**

*Green Wymondley*



# David Jackson, Delamere House, Great Wymondley

I am a creative entrepreneur and have been living in Great Wymondley at Delamere House for almost 30 years with my wife Victoria and two children.

I have a degree in geography and environmental science from Lancaster University and an MBA from Bradford Management School.

My interests include history, archaeology and sustainability. In fact, by coincidence, I did some of the same coursework that Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews did at Lancaster University. We undoubtedly know some of the same people, for example Professor Mike Parker Pearson who has conducted the landmark research at Stonehenge.

Our small business specializes in sustainable marketing solutions, especially for Indian Pharmaceutical and large PLCs in UK and Europe.

We also support an art project called "Art-Amis" and as much as I am not a professional artist, I am creating some work from my travels and recently a piece depicting the destruction of corn in Ukraine.



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# Solar Harm in Great Wymondley

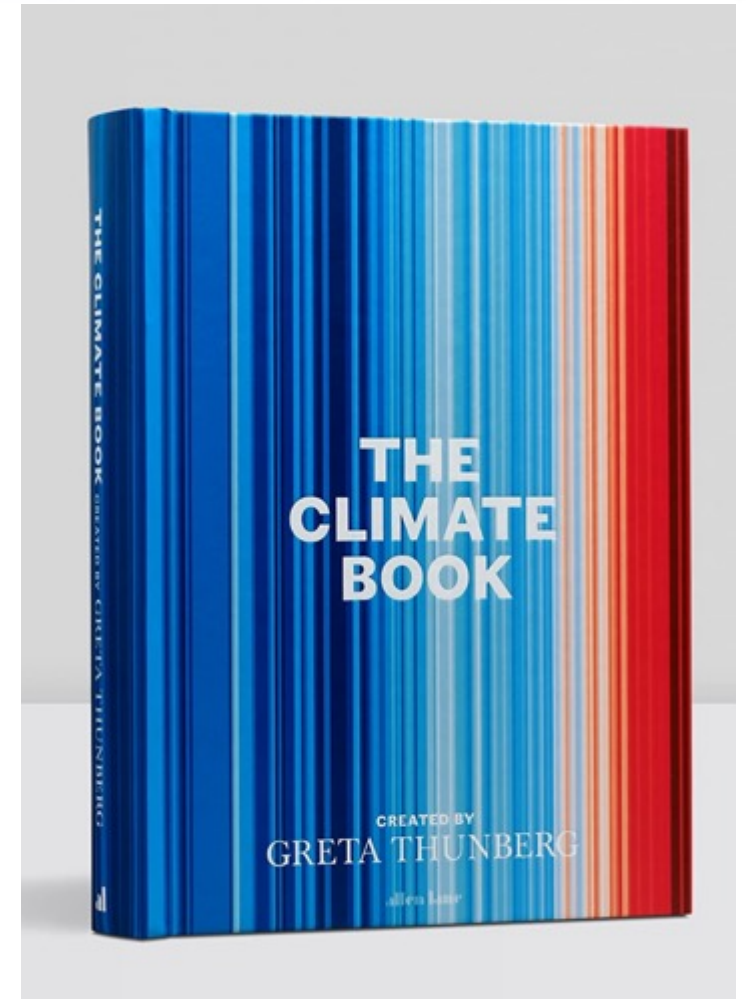
The residents of Great Wymondley are fully aware of the need to develop renewable energy.

Recent headlines of fires in Europe, flooding in Japan, and extreme heat in the USA - all inextricably lead to one conclusion.

Greenhouse emissions, mostly from fossil fuels burnt released into the air are leading to the earth's warming.

Based on current policies, the IPCC estimates that global warming will reach 3.2c by 2100.

This will lead to a climate catastrophe as outlined in the Greta Thunberg best seller “The Climate Book”.



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# Two wrongs do not make a right

So given this why did 95% of householders in Great Wymondley sign a petition against building a 217-acre solar industrial facility between the A1 north and the eastern boundary of Great Wymondley?

**Put simply - “two wrongs do not make a right”.**

We have heard that green belt was implemented in govt policy to stop HARMFUL overdevelopment and the merging of towns to become urban sprawl. **The green belt** also acts as the filter of harmful CO<sup>2</sup>..you might conclude the A1M is a powerful producer of CO<sup>2</sup>. Farmland long-term will be needed in the short/medium term to meet food needs.

Once **the green belt** is gone on this site it will be irreparably damaged for a return to agriculture. This industrial solar site will need hundreds of **tonnes of concrete** laid on the land and thousands of post holes.



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# The deeper question is whether solar panels should be placed on all new builds and commercial buildings

Should we be putting the panels somewhere else?

See the thousands of houses being built around Stevenage and Hitchin.

Part of the solution has to be on the roofs of non-listed houses in the Wymondleys for example and legislated on any new builds.

But we are not here today to talk about this.

The answer to where the panels should go would come from a North Herts strategy document dealing with solar infrastructure, rather than the lottery approach we see in this flawed proposal.



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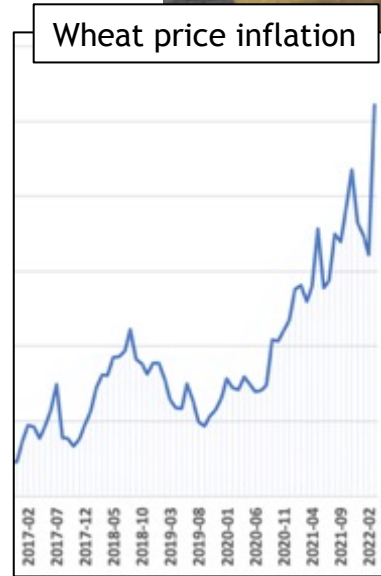
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# What sort of England do we want to live in?

Heritage by implication, respects those who have lived here in the past, mostly farming the land. This may appear old-fashioned to some, but it is a cornerstone of British values of fairness, honesty and the right to be heard.

There are disturbing parallels between the two great wars and the current destruction of grain and countryside in Ukraine which are leading to famine and migration and spiralling wheat prices... yet here we see valuable farmland being proposed to be turned over to a large industrial solar complex.



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# The past and the future

Part of the word heritage of course values the past and has the vision to plan for the FUTURE.

Most would agree that SOLAR PANELS....the latest and best solar panels are an important part of the future. In fact, it is easy to give any person a leading question that says, “**Do you think solar panels are good?**” and they will say yes. But if you consider a better approach to where panels might be sited rather than damaging **the green belt** and the broader setting of the heritage of the nation. Also, we should never install anything but the latest and most efficient panel or we invite redundancy of the technology even sooner. In this proposal we not only damage the wider heritage of the Wymondleys, but we also install panels and technology which will be redundant in 10-15 years, such is the advances in panel and battery science.

**Surely you wouldn't put the least performing panels on such a site anyhow, would you?**



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# Why is solar wrong on this wider heritage site?

We have a proud heritage of saving greenery....but that is constantly under threat because we need housing for people and they need power. That power needs to be green power.

SOLAR PANELS are a part of that future.

We just object to the siting of the solar panels on this site.

1) It might be better on a brownfield site....as the govt has recently said regarding housing.

2) It might be better to supply an incentive to houses to put the panels on their individual houses.

3) Legislate for every new home and commercial building to have solar panels installed.

People have farmed this land for 5000 years and there is substantial evidence on the proposed site which sits between Great Wymondley and the Roman road heading to Lincolnshire and York.



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# Heritage impact on the setting of Great Wymondley

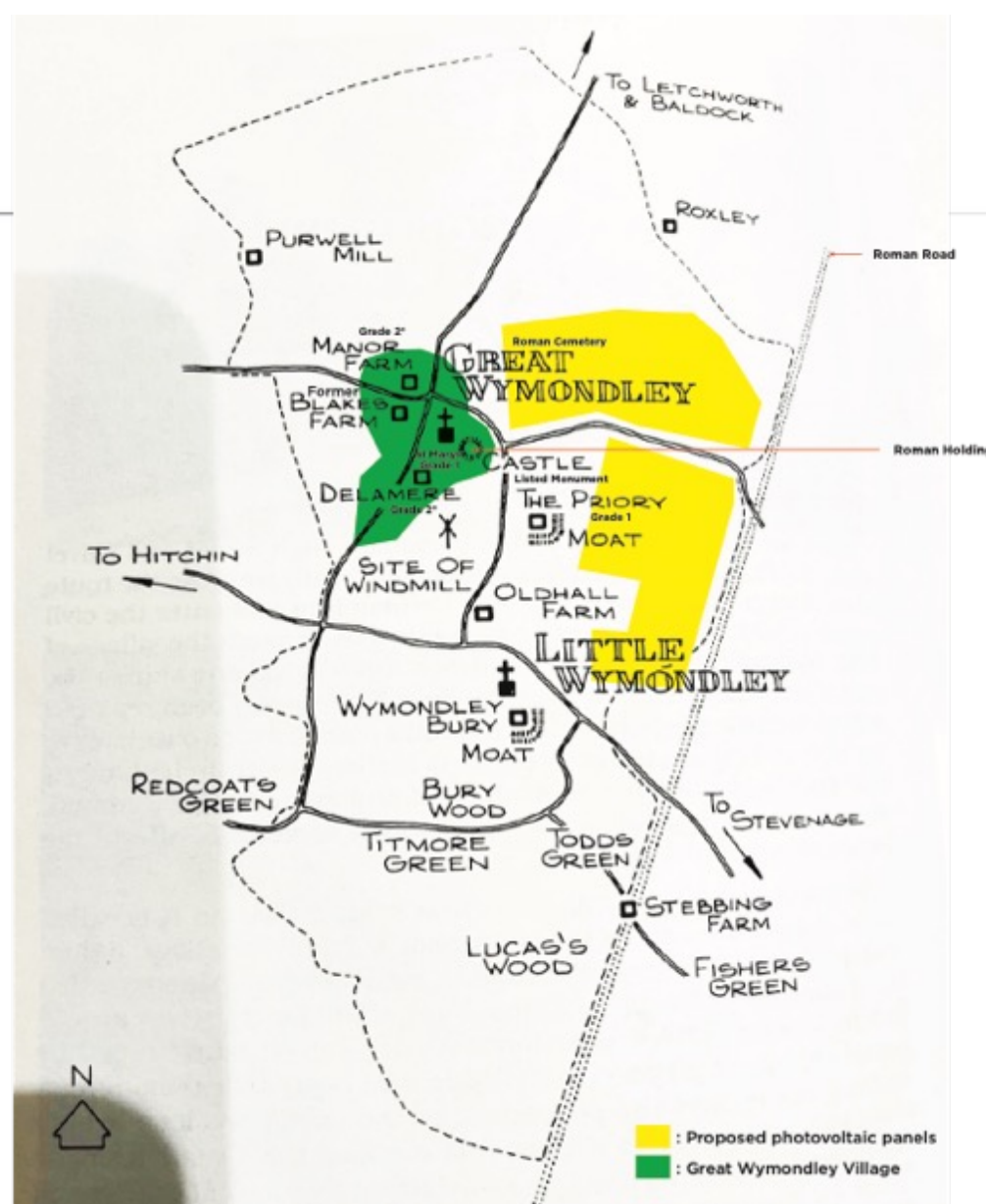
Viewing the Great Wymondley and Little Wymondley parishes or manorial holdings as a totality is much more important than simply viewing the built structures of the villages.

To quote the head of archaeology at North Herts Museum Hitchin in his paper:

The archaeology of the Wymondley's Keith Fitzpatrick-Mathews May 2020

**'THEY HAVE A RICH ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE, WHICH TELLS US SOME SURPRISING THINGS ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE TWO VILLAGES'**

Great Wymondley and Little Wymondley were probably one estate before being split in the past.



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# Some of the finest buildings in the country and county

By Domesday in 1086 the land of Great Wymondley consisted of 1500 acres....not the 50 acres or so taken by the built village of Great Wymondley. These 1500 acres would have encompassed the proposed site for the solar industrial complex.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER OUR OBJECTION, YOU SHOULD VIEW THAT WE LIVE IN THIS VILLAGE WHICH HAS SOME OF THE FINEST BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRY AND COUNTY. THE PARISH OF WYMONDLEY IS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND IT.

IF YOU VIEWED GREAT WYMONDLEY AS AN UNSPOILT GEM NESTLED BETWEEN THE URBAN CENTRES OF STEVENAGE AND HITCHIN THE SETTING OF THE VILLAGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT.

## Other nearby listed buildings

- **II\* The Manor House**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II 1 Post Office Row**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II Box Tree Cottage**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II Long Close**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II Manor Cottages**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II Lavender Cottage**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II Castle Cottage**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4
- **II 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Hornbeam Court, (Howard Cottage, Seymour Cottage, Boleyn Cottage, Aragon Cottage, C**  
Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire, SG4



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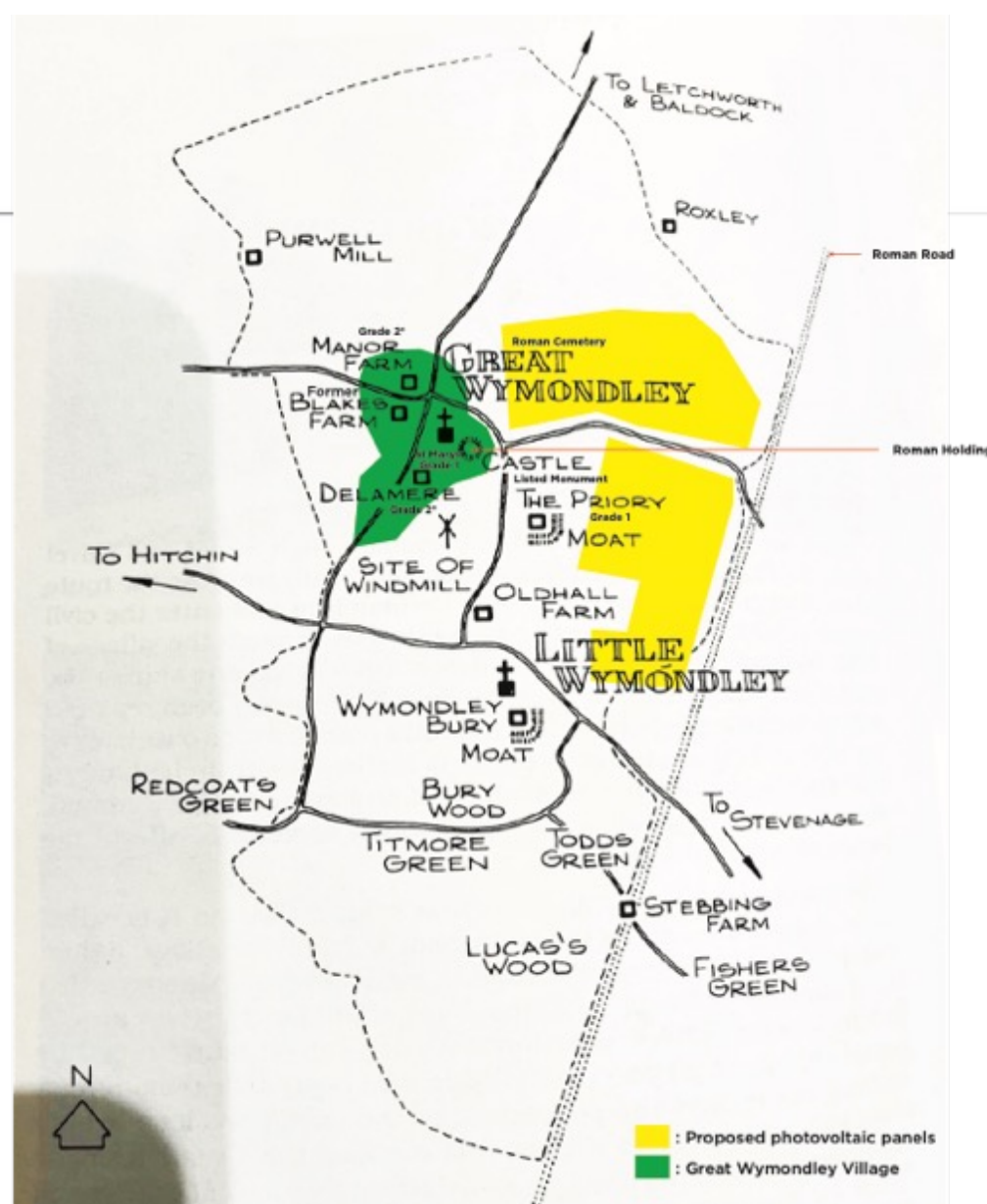
# Where does it stop?

OPPORTUNISM and WEALTH CREATION FOR THE LANDOWNER SHOULD NOT BE MASQUERADED AS A GOOD DEED.

Wealth creation from individuals will of course be cloaked in 'good solar panels to fight climate change' when in fact it uses greenbelt with a heritage of agricultural usage of 5000 years.

IGNORING THE RULES WE SET TO PROTECT OUR GREENBELT AND HERITAGE ALSO SETS A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT.

WHERE DOES IT STOP?

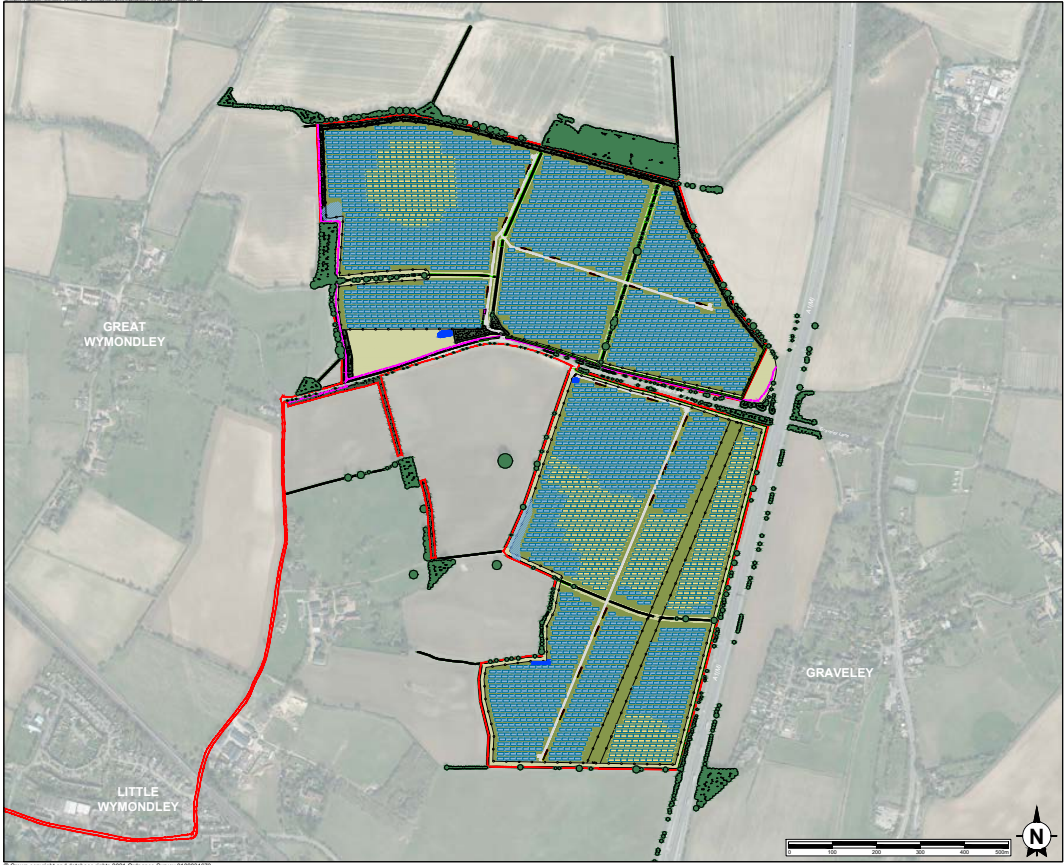
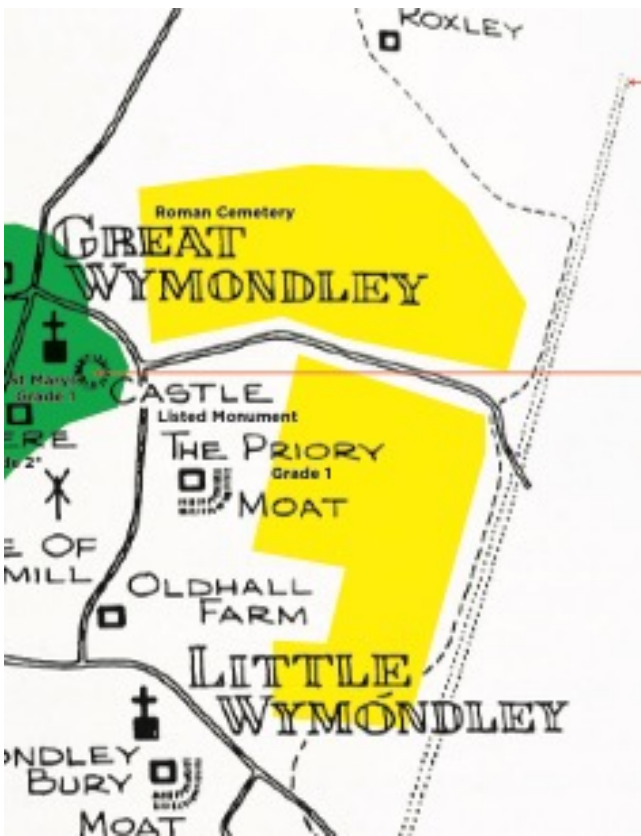


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# We have drawn our own simplified version of the proposed solar site



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# Neolithic / Bronze / Iron Age Wymondleys

Not enough research has been done to date. LiDAR can only tell us so much in what is a complex mixed geology.

Springs as feed the priory we know were very important to Neolithic communities (3200-2450 BC)

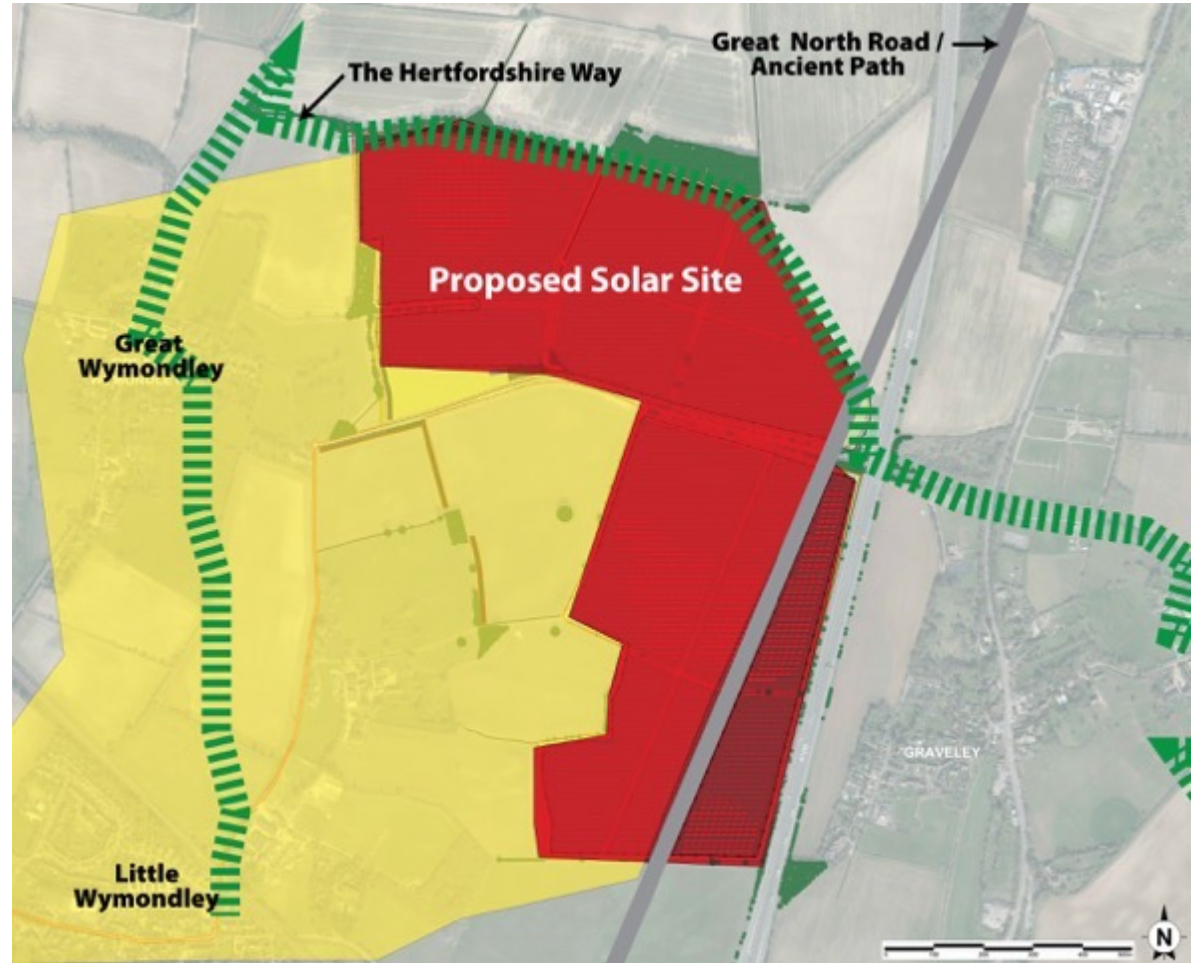
Ancient pathways connected ritual sites as in the Orkneys to Stonehenge... see the Gt North Road.

Early farmers in Britain were a mix of groups from Iberia/France to indigenous hunter-gatherers.

It is highly likely that important archaeology pushing back the link of the Wymondleys to the land 3400Bc exists on the solar site and other fields.

Evidence of Beaker burials adjacent to Wymondley would be a research project for Keith and his team in North Herts.

**Industrial solar site will destroy fragile evidence forever. Thereby compounding destruction of the Wymondleys heritage.**



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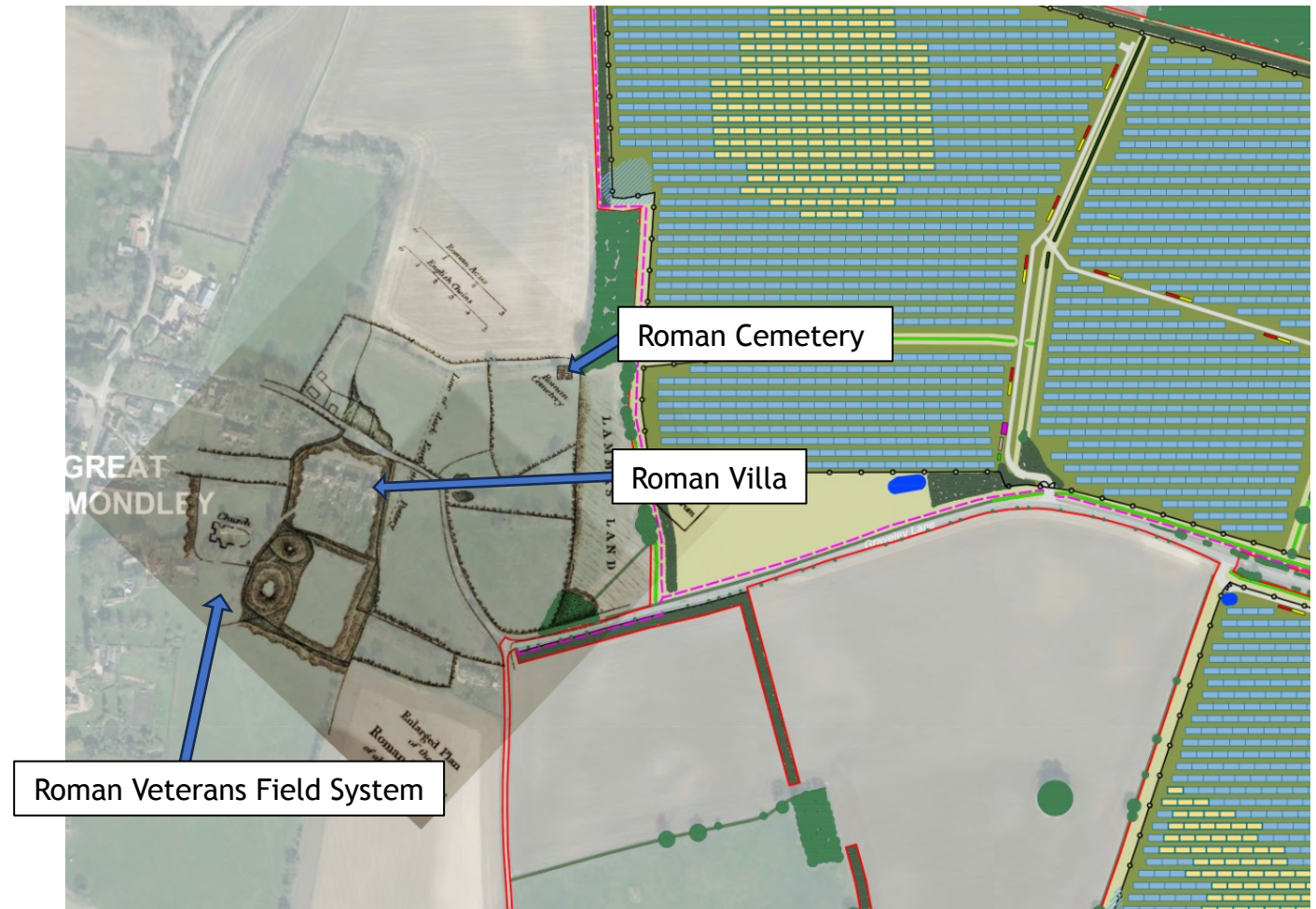
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# Solar site proximity to Roman Great Wymondley

There is much to discover yet about the extent of Roman Great Wymondley and its links to the nine springs Roman Villa.

Of course, Great Wymondley had its own Villa which is now unfortunately subsumed under the council houses, undoubtedly more research is needed towards the Roxley area beyond the Roman cemetery and towards the Great North road.



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# The Great Wymondley Roman heritage

## The Great Wymondley village

Workers installing drains in a field on the north side of Graveley Road in 1882 found a Roman pot. The local antiquary William Ransom heard about it and investigated further. His workers soon found 43 cinerary urns in an area measuring five by seven yards (4.6 × 6.4 m), with accompanying grave gifts (Figure 14). They also observed a 'line of black earth' in the same field, which turned out to be a ditch filled with broken pottery, ironwork, bronze and glass. These discoveries were part of the cemetery of a community that presumably lay nearby.

Hitchin Rural District Council began building houses south of Graveley Road in 1937, on a plot opposite the field with the Roman burial ground. It lay inside a large rectangular ditched and embanked enclosure,

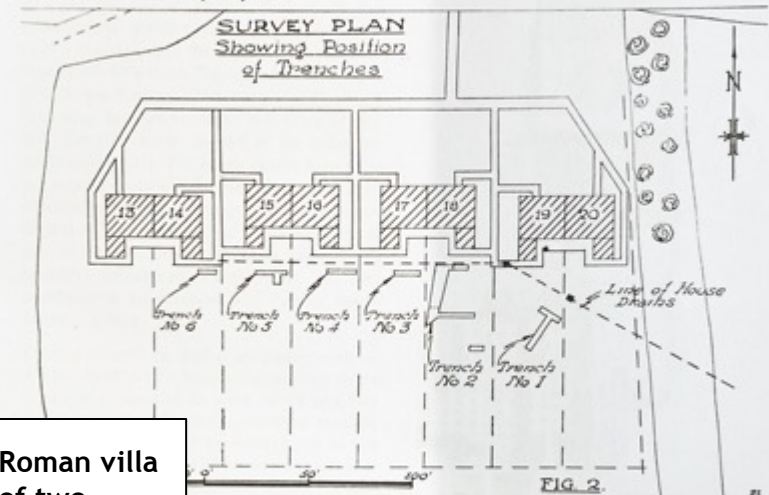
*Trans. Brit. Mus. Nat. Hist. Soc., Vol. IV, Pl. IV*



“A lot of research has been done on the archaeology of the village where a Roman villa and cemetery have been discovered. Near to the church there are outlines of two fields, which are of a size allocated to retired Roman army veterans (when they retired they had a right to a certain area of land in the conquered territories). The church has some Norman features. Not on the route but just outside the village stands Delamere House, a red-bricked Tudor building, once the property and residence of Cardinal Wolsey.”

*The Hertfordshire Way, by Bert Richardson*

usually identified with the bailey of Wymondley Castle. Percival Westell, the curator of Letchworth Museum, went to investigate in July of that year as the foundation trenches had turned up sherds of Roman pottery. He dug six trenches behind the houses, with large quantities of Roman finds in each (Figure 15). One uncovered a flint and rubble surface, 24 × 6 feet (7.3 × 1.8 m), which Westell believed to be the floor of a building. The dimensions and the material used to make it are more appropriate to a path or track, though. In another trench was a circular rammed clay floor and fired daub, evidence for a roundhouse destroyed by fire.



Plan of the trenches he excavated on Graveley Road in 1937

the first and second centuries AD, exactly contemporary with the cemetery over which it was less wealthy than that of the Little Wymondley Bypass villa. It was perhaps a villa for cultural workers, tenants on an estate whose wealthy owners lived elsewhere. The chance that we know where their landlords' house lay, thanks to another Victorian



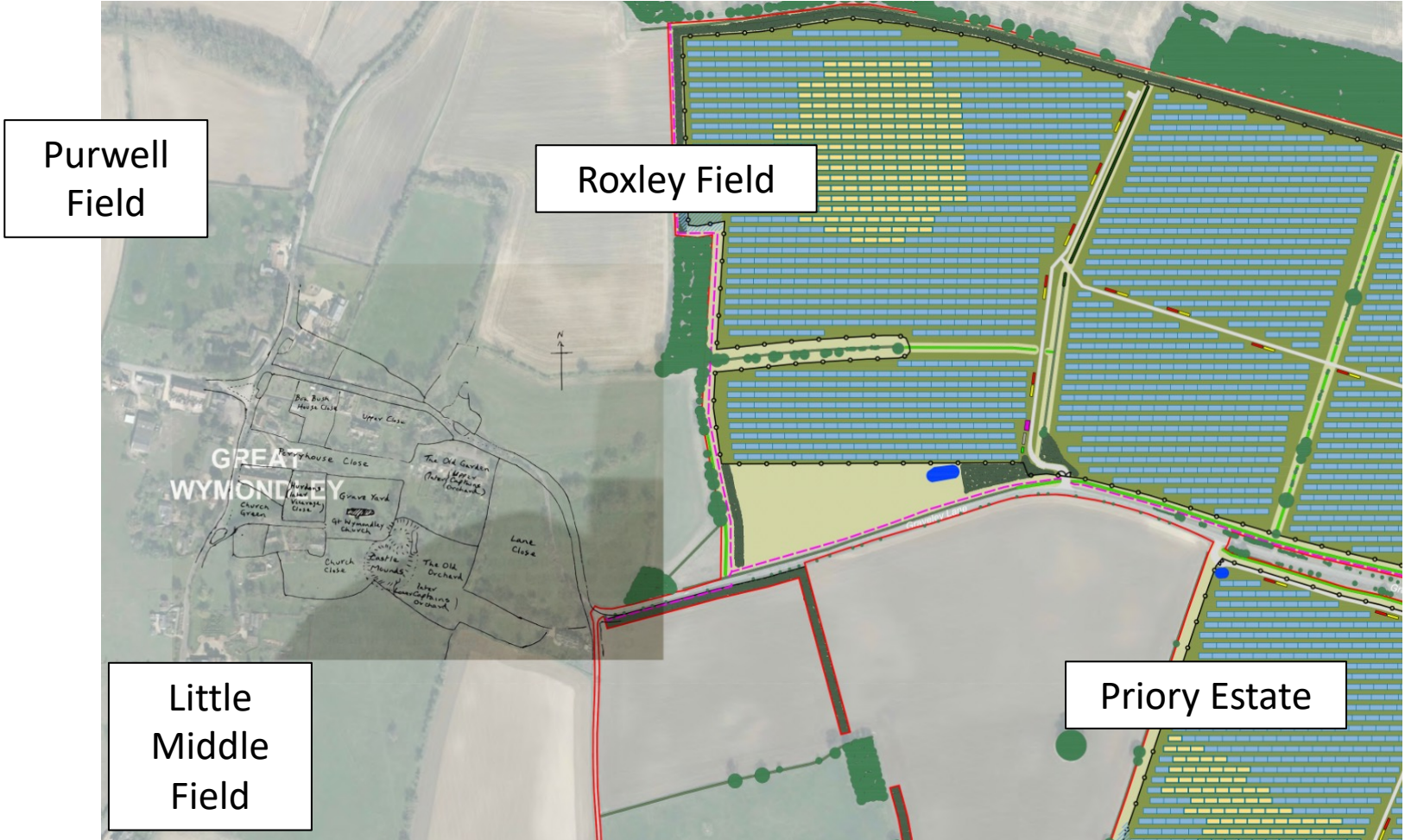
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# Solar site proximity to medieval Great Wymondley

Medieval Great Wymondley carried on from the Anglo-Saxon period with a simplified crop rotation of four fields.



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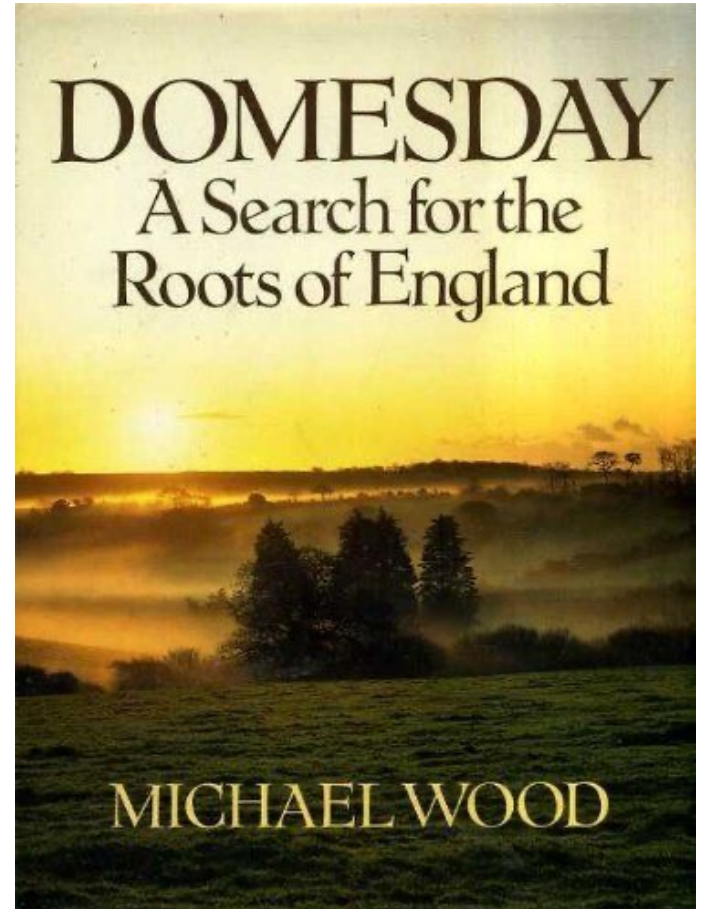
# Domesday - A Search for the Roots of England

In the Domesday entries for Hertfordshire Great Wymondley is FIRST. It was a royal estate - formerly gifted to the abbey of Chateris in the fens.

Michael Wood the esteemed historian in his book DOMESDAY...In search of the roots of England sites the totality of Great Wymondley as one of the best examples of continuous unbroken occupation from Roman to Anglo-Saxon to Norman and thence on to early medieval and Elizabethan in the country.

Michael was so concerned on the matter of preserving the village's Norman church he gave a fundraising talk in The Priory Barn some years back on the importance of Wymondley. He is now a Professor of History at Manchester University as well as being regularly featured on BBC 4 for the last 24 years.

Michael Wood uses the case of the roots of Domesday going back to a hypothetical census of Great Wymondley near the end of the Roman occupation in circa 410AD. Remember the Roman villas associated at Nine Springs and the potential Roman enclosure pre-date the Castle and Mound next to the 12 century Church in Great Wymondley.



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# Solar site proximity to the common field system

Great Wymondley has always been linked to the land surrounding it and especially the the part leading to Hitchin and the section leading to the great north road.

The Wymondley enclosure act of 1811 had the effect of ending the strip system of cultivation.

It is believed there were four common fields; “Roxley”, “Purwell”, “Middle Field” and “Little Middle Field” although some of those names had changed since the year 1300.

It is probable that the manor house, the lord's principal dwelling was sited on the castle ley earthworks of the 12<sup>th</sup> century castle.



Hertfordshire record office 44216



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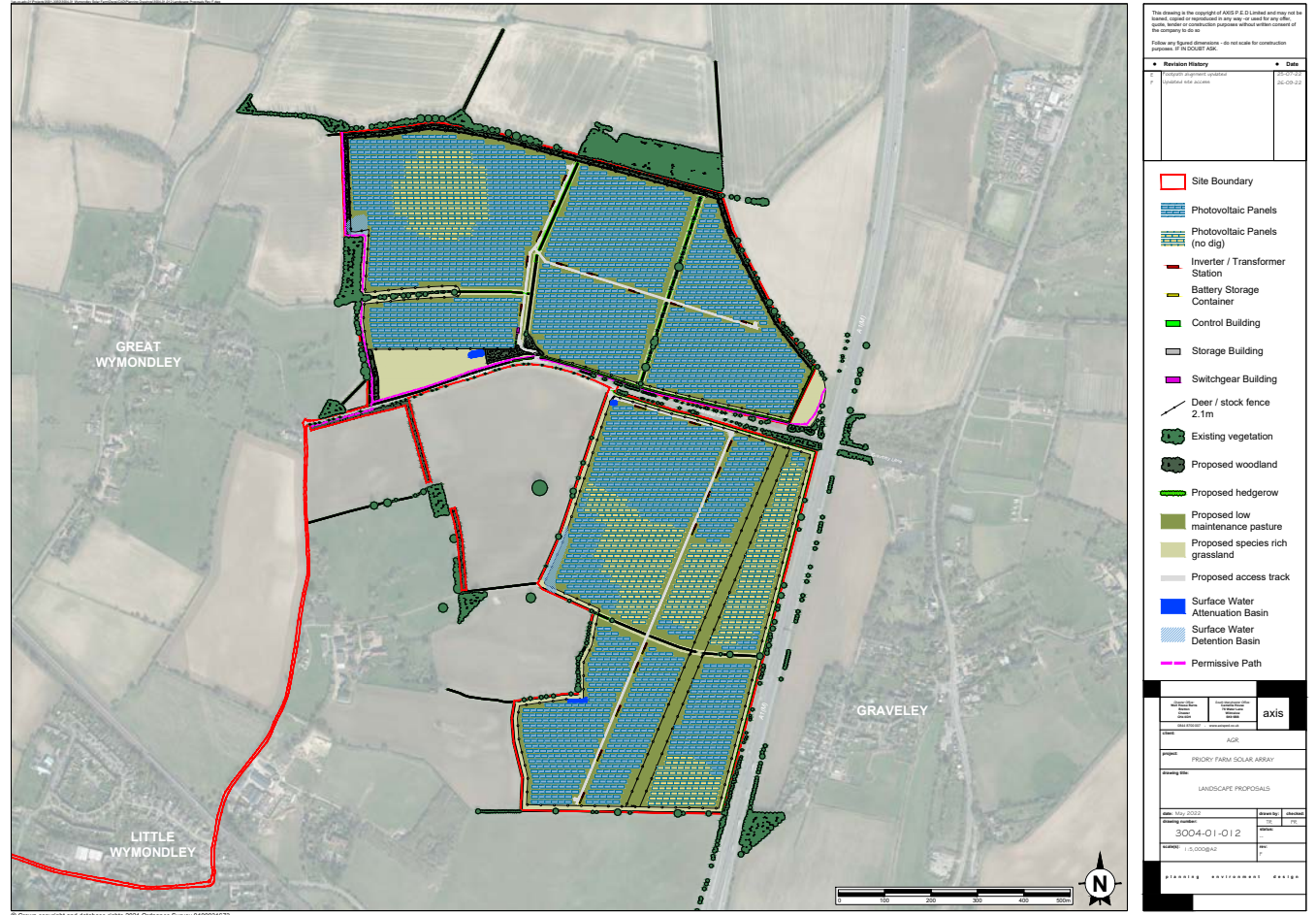
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IN GREAT WYMONDLEY

# All this continuous history leads to the largest concentration of listed buildings centered around the proposed solar site in Hertfordshire

In terms of the physical history of the buildings which make up the Wymondeys.

This is the greatest concentration of listed buildings in Hertfordshire including nationally important Grade 1 and Grade 2\* star buildings.

Great Wymondley has 14 listed buildings plus the Grade 1 church.



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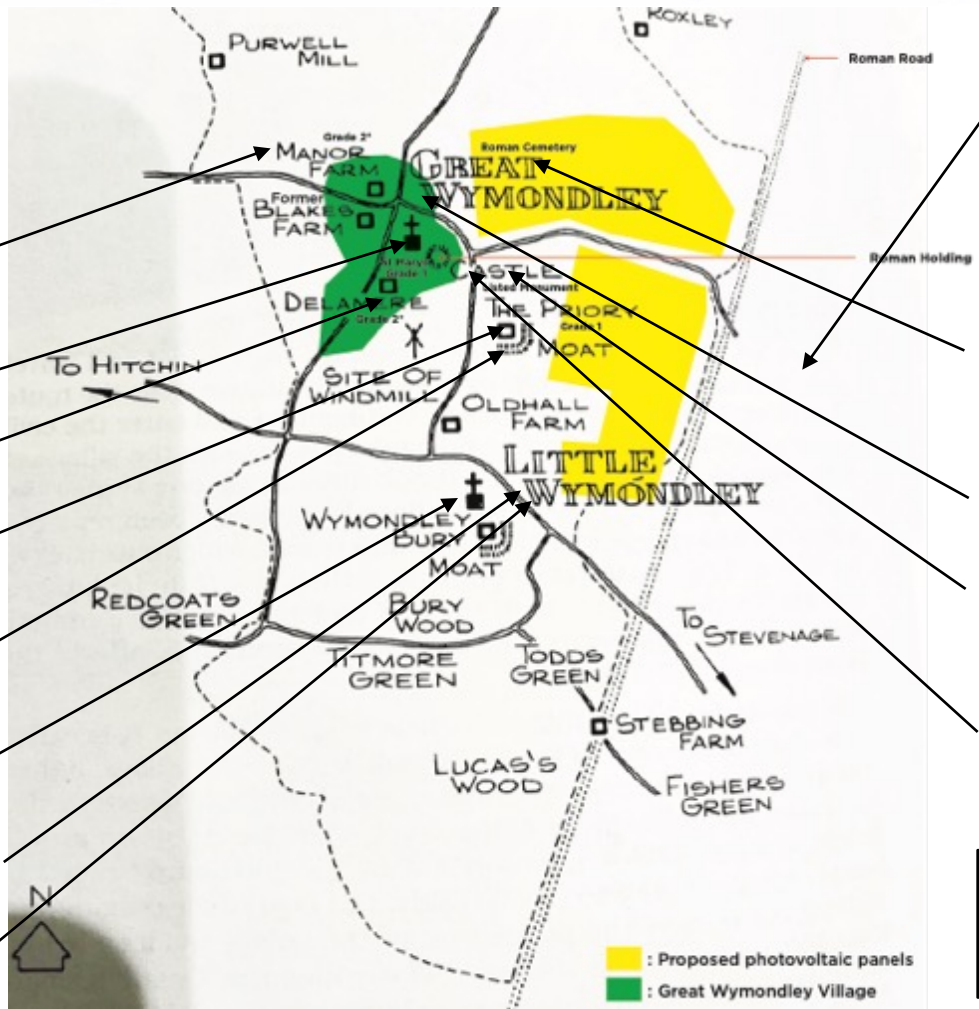
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# 67 listed buildings lie within 200m - 1250m of the proposed industrial complex... 2 out of 7 Grade 1 structures (non-church North Herts)

In Great Wymondley and Little Wymondley there are 43 listed buildings. Below are 200 - 500m from the solar site.

1. Grade 2\* - The Manor
2. Grade 1 - St Marys Church
3. Grade 2\* - Delamere
4. Grade 1 - The Priory
5. Grade 2\* - The Tithe Barn
6. Grade 1 - Wymondley Bury
7. Grade 2\* - Wymondley House
8. Grade 2\* - Wymondley Hall



In Graveley there are 24 Grade 2 listed buildings and 2 Grade 1 Churches.

9. Listed Archaeological Site - Roman Cemetery
10. Long close - Grade 2
11. Roman origins field system
12. Listed Monument - Motte and Bailey Castle

See the appendix at the end of the document for more info on some of the listed buildings



# Setting of Heritage Assets

Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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 the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

The setting itself is not designated. Every heritage asset, whether designated or not has a setting. Its importance, and therefore the degree of protection it is offered in planning decisions, depends entirely on the contribution it makes to the significance of the heritage asset or its appreciation.

No additional consent is required to alter the setting of any heritage asset. Works may require planning permission and additionally, new works within the setting of a listed building or scheduled monument may require listed building consent or scheduled monument consent, as appropriate, if they physically attach to or physically impact upon the building or site.

The setting of a World Heritage Site is not to be confused with its buffer zone, if it has one. A buffer zone is a discreet area to which a particular policy or guideline applies in order generally to protect the setting. The setting itself is likely to be a larger area and will vary from time to time.

Historic England has produced guidance on managing change within the setting of heritage assets.

**It is our contention that this proposed industrial solar complex will damage the setting of multiple listed buildings in an area which has been agricultural for over 2000 years.**



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# Application Reference: s62A/2022/0011 - Refusal

## *Heritage assets - setting*

26. The Framework explains in the Glossary that:

*'Setting of a heritage asset: 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, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*

27. In terms of Scheduled Monuments, the Applicant's Heritage Statement concludes that there is considered to be no harm to the heritage significance of the Scheduled The Crump with regards to setting<sup>7</sup>. It provides no similar conclusion in respect of the Scheduled Monument of Battles Manor.

29. These Scheduled Monuments are located within a strongly defined rural context, and this contributes positively to their surroundings and significance. Visitors are currently able to appreciate the agricultural and societal history of this part of Essex and its connection with the wider landscape. The introduction of rows of solar panels and associated infrastructure would drastically alter this relationship and the experience of those seeking to appreciate it. Instead of open agricultural fields the proposal would form an expansive industrial 'techscape', severing the monuments from the rural context in which they are currently experienced.

30. The Crump in particular is a rare survival, and the monument draws a considerable amount of significance from how it is experienced in the historic landscape setting. A setting which, whilst changing over the centuries, retains a dominantly rural character. Accordingly, this would result in harm to the significance of the scheduled monument The Crump, and to a lesser degree, that of Battles Manor.

31. With regard to listed buildings, Section 66(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, as amended, (PLBCA) requires that the SoS shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.



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# Application Reference: s62A/2022/0011 - Refusal

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32. The Crump (buildings rather than the ringworks) and Battles Hall are both Grade II listed buildings. The latter is also associated with the Grade II listed Cart Lodge, and Dovecote. Brick House, Rose Garth and Peyton Hall and Barn are all Listed Grade II buildings and located no more than 500 metres from the site. Similar to the Scheduled Monuments, the settings of these listed buildings would be dramatically altered. Rather than read and experienced within a rural landscape and associated historical connections with it, the listed buildings would instead be experienced in an utilitarian setting defined by solar arrays, fencing, CCTV cameras on poles, a DNO substation and other infrastructure. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the listed buildings.

33. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. In this case, the harm arising to the settings of the Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings identified would be no greater than less than substantial<sup>9</sup> and therefore Paragraph 202 of the Framework applies.

34. The public benefits of the proposal are set out in the 'Need and potential benefits' section of this decision. Whilst these benefits weigh significantly to moderately in favour of the proposal, they would not outweigh the significant harm to the settings of the Scheduled Monuments the conservation of which is afforded great weight in the Framework. For similar reasons, they would fail to preserve the setting of the listed buildings, in being contrary to the clear expectations of s66(1) of the PLBCA, which anticipates special regard being had to that preservation. The dual conflict of the proposal with national policy and statute, and the cumulative harm that would arise from them, are matters of very significant weight that militate against them succeeding.

35. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with Policies ENV2 and ENV4 of the LP which require that where nationally important archaeological remains and their settings are affected by proposed development there will be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ and development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings.

36. It is also at odds with Chapter 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment of the Framework, which include in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustained and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.





# Landscape, not the site. Contemporary thinking in archaeology

As we see, our approach is to view the totality of the various buildings in Great Wymondley and in particular, plus The Priory and Tithe Barn in this objection. Please note, we have not had time to include Graveley or all of Little Wymondley as there are 67 listed buildings within 200m to 1250m of the proposed solar site.

The importance of viewing the wider landscape, rather than the simple surface features is much exemplified by Stonehenge, where Professor Mike Parker Pearson has rewritten the history of one of Britain's most famous monuments in the last 10 years.

You will note also that the government is trying to make up for its mistakes of the past regarding the roadway in proximity to the site. So we cannot simply view heritage as the obvious structures when so much probably lies beneath the surface.



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# It might be argued that this massive 'near obsolescent' industrial solar site will not damage the archaeology

We consider this complete and utter nonsense; at best you are minimizing the wholesale destruction of the site.

View the number of post holes, the battery facility and the fence.

This farmland has over the last 5000 years been subtly changed reflecting the changing land management practices from the Bronze age celtic, Roman anglo-saxon to early Medieval to the larger field systems we see today

The relationship between the major Roman road only 1000m from Great Wymondley was obviously a draw for commerce and agricultural produce.

The various finds on the proposed site as in the case of Stonehenge do not probably reflect what may be revealed if further archaeological research was conducted. Lidar can only reveal certain features, but it appears there was a ladder-style Roman settlement along the old Roman road. We have seen that there was a Roman farm on the site of the council houses in Great Wymondley. There is also the cemetery which probably served the Roman farmstead and community back over 2000 years.



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# Isn't it simply nimbyism?

So why are the objectors of Great Wymondley trumpeting themselves as having a sort of special status in terms of our heritage credentials?

Isn't it simply nimbyism?

## PUT SIMPLY

THEY THINK MORE DAMAGE WILL BE DONE TO THE HERITAGE OF THE PARISH OR MANOR OR SETTING OF THIS ANCIENT VILLAGE THAN HAS BEEN DONE BY... *(see list of people on the next page)*



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**SAY NO** TO **SOLAR HARM**  
IN GREAT WYMONDLEY

# Less than joined-up thinking... more solar does not mean we have to build on agricultural green belt

This 217-acre industrial solar site will adversely change the land and continue the ‘**LESS THAN JOINED UP THINKING**’ of destruction which is compromising this ancient land which has always fostered agriculture which has helped feed the country.

Note the Haileys who farmed 1200 acres from Delamere House in the 1960s, provided fruit and vegetables and wheat and corn for Covent Garden.



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# Heritage credentials

So many places have been blighted without due attention being given to the setting.

STONEHENGE for example with its road running through the Neolithic site is now being rectified.

While we might not consider Great Wymondley, Little Wymondley and Graveley as having the same international importance, they do have a significant value in terms of their collective HERITAGE. Hence their importance even in written history.



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# Isn't it simply nimbyism? (continued)

**THE UNKNOWN LEGIONARY...**who left their coins to be found by Seebohm and Ratcliff

**THE UNKNOWN ANGLO-SAXON WHO BUILT A CHURCH**

**WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.....**who owned the land

**KING STEPHEN** in the anarchy who forced the building of a motte and Bailey at Great Wymondley

**CARDINAL WOLSEY...**who used Delamere House as a hunting lodge

**HENRY VIII...**who dissolved all catholic monasteries in England and in fact wrecked the Priory in Little Wymondley

**OLIVER CROMWELL...**who challenged the monarchy



**Two wrongs do not make a right**



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# Heritage primary objection summary

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- As locals of course we want to preserve the countryside for future generations...Greenbelt is an important legislation on many levels.
- The village raised £300k to help preserve St Mary's church in the last 10 years alone.
- We do not see that covering valuable farmland with low-grade solar panels is the answer to the renewable energy crisis...alternatives do exist.
- As we see grain being destroyed in Ukraine in a war reminiscent of the second world war...how can farmland be destroyed here?
- The fact important luminaries like Michael Wood and the North Herts county archaeologist Keith single the Wymondleys out as special.
- A massive concentration of listed buildings...67 lies within 1 kilometre of the site...the Grade 1 Priory is only 200 metres away.
- The massive scale of the development on pristine land which has been agriculture going back 5000 years.



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# Heritage primary objection summary (continued)

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- The Great North road runs and Hertfordshire Way skirt the site showing that trade, and communication of national importance has traversed near the site for thousands of years.
- Delamere House, The Manor House, The ancient Monument of the Castle, and the Priory have all had their connections with Kings. Great Wymondley even provided by decree the cupbearer for coronations from Norman times to the middle of the 20 century.
- All current thinking in archaeology looks at the setting of places and the landscape they sit within. The importance of many listed buildings which have been preserved plus the possibility of yet further unexplored archaeology means we have to preserve our wider settings of national importance.
- By any measure, you will not find real English history so embedded in English settlement as you do in the Wymondleys. Wymondlybury in Little Wymondley is Grade 1. The Tithe Barn at the Priory is Grade 2\*. Delamere is by implication linked to Hatfield House and Hampton Court.
- The pride we take in the preservation of our environment has been exemplified by the survival of the Wymondleys as a very special place. But like all fragile environments, we know it is easy to destroy it with hasty ill-considered short-term thinking.



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# Heritage primary objection summary (continued)

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- The site if used for the industrial solar facility will be irreparably damaged. We would be deluding ourselves to think that it would ever return to agriculture. Other parts of the objection will cover green belt infill.
- Given the go-ahead to build on Green Belt near such a concentration of listed heritage in a conservation area begs the question...where can't you build now?
- We understand that solar panels are an important part of the future...but only in a strategic plan that legislates all new homes and commercial buildings need to have solar panels fitted.
- Opportunism and zeal to create this solar industrial concept should not masquerade itself as some panacea for the need for alternative sources of energy to replace fossil fuels

**Irreparable damage can be done to the landscape and heritage of the Wymondleys if this reckless scheme is allowed to progress. Two wrongs do not make a right. Let us work together to correct climate change with a well-thought-out strategic plan which does not destroy the setting of fragile heritage and hastily rush through plans which compromise the green belt.**

*Thank you for your time, David Jackson*



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## Appendix (see following pages)

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- The Castle
- The Priory, The Tithe Barns and Linked Lands
- St Marys Church
- Delamere House, Great Wymondley
- The Manor Farm, Great Wymondley



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# The Castle

The earthworks of a motte-and-bailey castle lie to the southeast of the Church of St Mary. The motte, which held a wooden tower, is 28 m in diameter at its base and survives to a height of about 2.5 m (Figure 30). The bailey lies to its south and measures about 28 m north to south and 25 m east to west, with a large bank on the western and southern sides. The ditch is up to 10 m wide and 2 m deep and, apart from a pond at the southwest corner, is dry. An excavation on the castle in 1882 uncovered both Roman and medieval pottery (described as 'old pots').

There are no documents relating to the castle's foundation, although the historian Noël Farris believed it was the work of John de Argentine. He was a supporter of King Stephen during the Anarchy, the civil war with Empress Matilda in the 1130s and 40s. It was close to his manor house, mentioned in a document of 1283, and stood on land known as Castel Ley by 1423. The house was possibly in the bailey of the castle, and by 1318, when the lord of manor John de Argentine died, its location was described as a 'toft', empty land.

The motte-and-bailey was inserted into the southwest corner of an existing rectangular earthwork (Figure 31). This enclosure measures about 155 m north to south and 100 m east to west. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments inspector concluded in 1970 that this more extensive earthwork was manorial in origin, which is now part of the scheduling description for the castle.



*Lidar view of the castle, left of centre*



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# The Priory, The Tithe Barns and Linked Lands

## Grade 1 The Priory

Founded around 1207, the first essential of any Priory was to ensure there was a pure water supply and this came from a spring located North-East of The Priory next to the proposed industrial solar site. This spring also fed the fish breeding ponds.

Containing one of the best preserved Tithe barns in the country. The timbers of the massive barn date from 1550. It is likely the water supply for the priory is drawn in the past from the lands for the proposed solar site.

**What effect will the revised water runoff on these ancient foundations?**

This very important Augustine priory with its thriving local business will be blighted by the development.

## Grade 2\* Tithe Barn

At the heart of this historic setting is the tithe barn, built in 1541 by James Needham who was carpenter to King Henry VIII. The tithe barn is a magnificent building and is possibly the finest timber barn in England.



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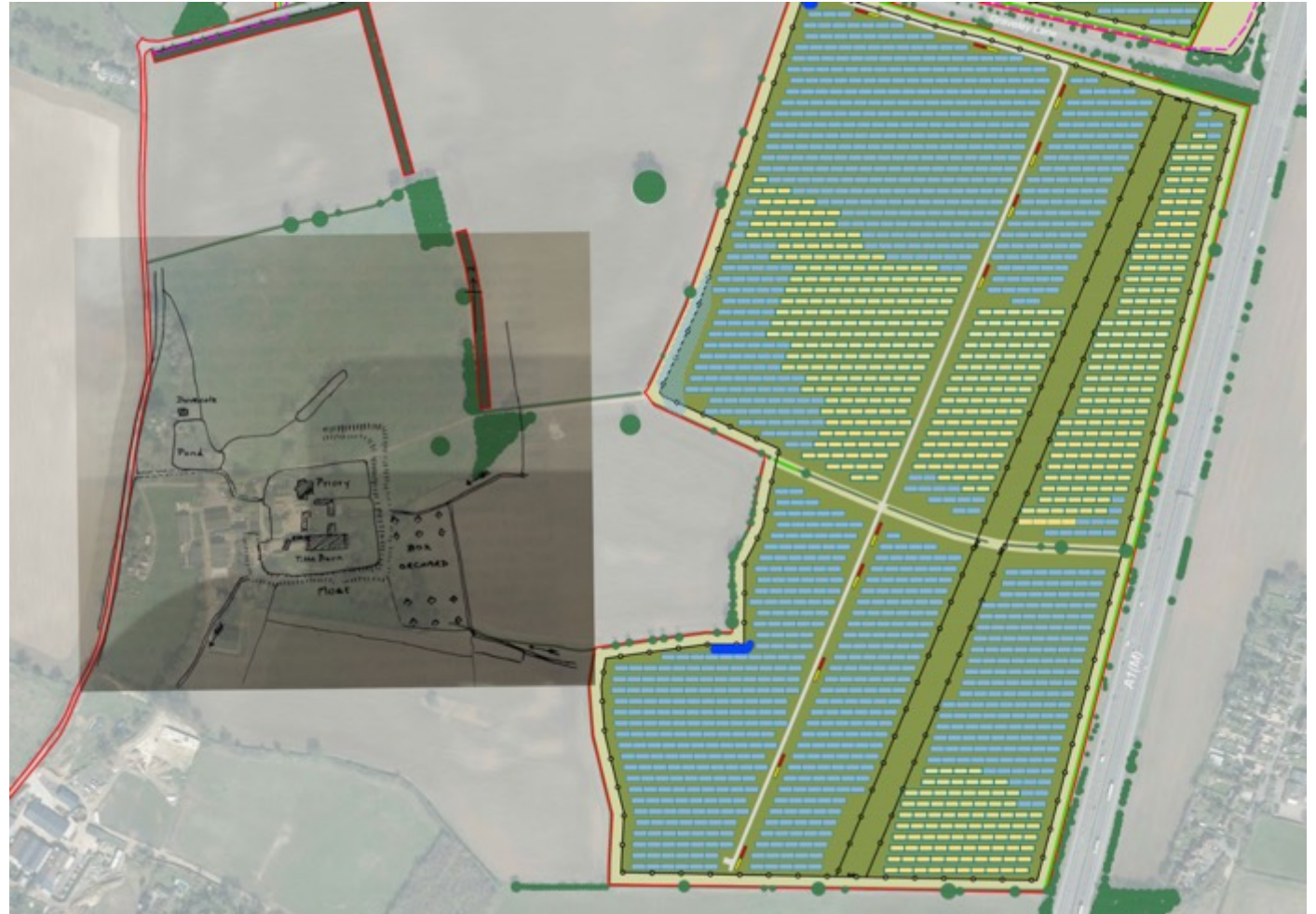
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# The Priory, juxtaposed to the massive proposed solar site

The scale and proximity of the proposed industrial solar site can be seen here against the backdrop of a map of the Grade 1 Priory and the finest listed Grad 2\* Tithe Barn. Note that water drawn from the lands which the site will stand on feed the existing pond at the priory. Of course in the past, The Priory would have owned much of this land... but still in terms of its link to the wider landscape, it is very important.



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# St Marys Church

## Grade 1 St Marys Church Gt Wymondley

One of only two churches linked intrinsically to the main church of St Mary's in the centre of Hitchin.

Dated from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century on Saxon foundations.

Link to Elstow and Cambridge.



Grade 1 St Marys Church Gt Wymondley



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# Delamere House, Great Wymondley

Grade 2\* Delamere House  
Great Wymondley

Reputedly a hunting lodge of Cardinal  
Wolsey is one of the finest  
Elizabethan/Jacobean buildings in Herts.

Visited by Cardinal Wolsey in its heyday,  
one of the most important Elizabethan  
houses in the county.



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# The Manor Farm, Great Wymondley

Grade 2\* The Manor Farm  
Great Wymondley

Visited by kings.

On the junction of four  
roads in Great Wymondley.  
Important because of the  
frescoes inside and the  
structure inside.



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