

I am commenting on behalf of my holiday let business, which is situated in a Grade II Listed, timber-framed Tudor farmhouse dating from around 1590. It is near site 3. This whole area of the South Norfolk Claylands is recognised as of national importance for the quantity and quality of its pre-1750s rural architecture. The area around Hempnall is of particular importance as part of the C16th 'Great Rebuilding', with at least 30 yeoman farmhouses dating from around 1600 (not all Listed). The majority of these buildings (across South Norfolk, not just Hempnall) are timber-framed, and many of them still retain their thatched roofs. We also have many surviving Listed pre-modern timber-framed barns and agricultural buildings of great rarity and historic value. The applicant's PEIR appendix identified 300 Listed buildings in the zone of influence of this project. 49 of them are directly impacted by the scheme including Grade 1 Listed churches and Grade II* Listed high-status timber-framed houses. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has now confirmed that the field fire at Kenninghall on Sunday 9 August 2026, which burnt down two brick bungalows on the edge of the village, was caused by a spark from a transformer connected to the neighbouring solar farm. Given that East Pye Solar is proposing to place (substations and) transformers in around 100 fields across around 10 x 6 miles of our heritage-dense landscape, how do they propose to protect our timber-framed and thatched Listed and unlisted heritage properties from similar incidents? This is of particular concern as this is a landscape of arable fields and ancient meadows, which in the summer are extremely parched and flammable, allowing fire to spread quickly. The risk to our landscape is currently limited and very carefully managed. This proposal would put permanent potential sources of ignition throughout our whole landscape in fields in close proximity to timber-framed homes and conservation villages. Those who own listed properties are already having to pay huge insurance premiums due to the high rebuild costs - several thousands of Pounds annually. Once the fire risks of transformers and other electrical equipment in sun-parched fields across our entire landscape is fully understood by insurers, these premiums are likely to increase even further or make our heritage buildings uninsurable. This will make living in such buildings and their conservation, which relies on the personal finances of private individuals, impossible. I will comment further in my written representation about the potential financial impact to my holiday let business of the unsympathetic industrial transformation of our ancient landscape. Here I especially want to ask the applicant why, when they learned of the sheer number of Listed Buildings in this area, fire risk to the South Norfolk timber-framed/thatched heritage landscape was not recognised as a significant reason to avoid the entire area when selecting the site for this development. I also want to ask what they plan to do to mitigate this now evidenced fire risk, especially given the water situation locally and their tankering proposal, how they plan to adequately buffer homes, especially those of timber-framed/thatched construction, and to compensate owners for any increases in their insurance premiums or potential fire damage to their properties.