



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by **Jonathan Bore MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F1040/W/25/3364999

Land west of Caldwell Road, Drakelow, Burton on Trent, DE15 9TX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Enso Green Holdings V Limited against South Derbyshire District Council.
 - The application ref is DMPA/2024/0925.
 - The development proposed is a battery energy storage system with associated infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused for a battery energy storage system with associated infrastructure.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the benefits of additional energy storage capacity; the impact on the landscape; and the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Reasons

3. National and international commitments towards addressing climate change and lowering carbon emissions are well documented and do not need to be repeated here. The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and support low carbon energy and associated infrastructure, and the overarching National Policy Statements for Energy, Renewable Energy and Electricity Networks Infrastructure recognise the role that energy storage plays in achieving net zero and providing flexibility to the energy system.
4. Locally the Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to tackling climate change. Policy SD6 of the South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 1 (2016) expresses support for renewable and other energy developments subject to environmental and amenity considerations. Land near the former Drakelow Power Station site has been the focus of a number of energy-related proposals with the aim of making use of grid connections. Notably, planning permission has been granted on appeal (planning application reference DMPA/2023/1665; appeal reference APP/F1040/W/25/3362049) for a battery energy storage system on land south of Walton Road, and a smaller scheme has been granted planning permission to the west of the site beyond a tree belt.
5. The proposed battery energy storage system has the benefit of a connection agreement with the National Grid and would fill the energy storage capacity at the

nearby National Grid Drakelow Substation. It would assist in the reduction of carbon emissions and the transition towards net zero by managing the load on the grid, smoothing out the generation of electricity to meet demand, helping to maintain security of supply and reducing the risk of black-outs and brown-outs. It would thus play a beneficial part in making more effective use of renewable energy generation.

6. As regards landscape impact, the appeal scheme would take up part of an open field to the south of scheme DMPA/2023/1665. However, the appeal site is not comparable with DMPA/2023/1665, being a step further into open landscape and less closely related to, and less visually influenced by, the infrastructure and housing on the former Drakelow Power Station site. The development would occupy what is now attractive grazing land with something of a parkland quality. Although the site is not traversed by rights of way and has relatively limited public visibility, the intrinsic character of this landscape would be significantly damaged by the scheme. The landscape and visual assessment's conclusion of a minor adverse effect after year 15 is not accepted. The planting belts which are intended over time to conceal the battery containers would themselves change the character of this landscape. The result would be a more enclosed and planted up area containing, in effect, industrial plant and equipment surrounded by security fencing and planting belts. It would amount to an uncoordinated and ad-hoc intrusion into the countryside, at odds with the current attractive green landscape.
7. A Council-commissioned study produced to support the determination of application DMPA/2023/1665 concluded that the cumulative impact of the battery energy storage schemes in this area, which included the current proposal, was not significant. But that study, though a material consideration, does not have the weight of a development plan document or supplementary planning document and carries limited weight. From my observation I consider that the further southward extension of battery energy storage represented by the appeal scheme would have a significant cumulative impact; it would spread industrial structures further into the countryside and change its landscape character. The harm the scheme would cause to the landscape and character of the countryside would be such that it would outweigh the benefits of the scheme described above.
8. As regards the effect on agricultural land, the agricultural land classification survey indicates that the site consists of Grade 2 (Very Good) agricultural land. Although the site is relatively small, the scheme still represents the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land for 40 years and this adds to the negative aspects of the scheme.
9. The proposal would thus conflict with Local Plan Policies BNE4 and BNE5, which together restrict development in rural areas and seek to protect landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness and the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Conclusion

10. The need to invest in infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions and effect a transition to net zero is fully recognised, but it is also important that such infrastructure should be in the right place and should have regard to other important planning objectives. In this case the harm that would be caused to the

countryside and landscape character, and to the best and most versatile agricultural land, outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

11. I have considered all the other matters raised including the potential for biodiversity net gain. I have also considered the appeal decisions submitted by the Appellant. However, each site and proposal is different, and each case must be considered on its merits. Neither these nor any of the other matters raised alters the balance of my conclusions.
12. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Jonathan Bore

INSPECTOR

