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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 April 2017

**by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DMS DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/W/17/3168894**

**Howewood Farm, White Stubbs Lane, Bayford, Hertfordshire SG13 8QA**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr R Wrangle against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 6/2016/1426/FULL, dated 8 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2016.
  - The development proposed is erection of agricultural storage barn.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of agricultural storage barn at Howewood Farm, White Stubbs Lane, Bayford, Hertfordshire SG13 8QA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 6/2016/1426/FULL, dated 8 July 2016, subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1:2500 OS Location Plan, TD-243-PL-101 Existing Site Layout, TD-243-PL-201 Proposed Site Layout, TD-243-PL-202 Proposed Plan and Elevations.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and any relevant development plan policies.

### Reasons

3. Part 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out the Government's policy for protecting Green Belt land. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and their permanence.
  4. The Council's development plan is the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (WHDP) which was adopted in April 2005, prior to the publication of the Framework in 2012. However, the Framework retains the previous policy to find inappropriate development by definition harmful to the Green Belt which should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 89 of the
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Framework regards the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt with exceptions including buildings for agriculture and forestry.

5. Howewood Farm falls entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt where the building proposed is required to store agricultural machinery and hay produced on the holding. Although Howewood Farm might be primarily in use as livery stables, the harvesting of hay and its storage, along with the machinery required for this purpose, would not alter the status of this proposal as a building required for agriculture. The Framework does not qualify the exception to buildings for agriculture as being not inappropriate in the Green Belt to only those circumstances where agriculture is the primary trade or business on the planning unit.
6. The Council raises no planning objections to this proposal beyond that it would be inappropriate development and result in harm to the Green Belt both for this reason and by reducing its openness. However, I have no reason to doubt the appellant's evidence that the building would be for agricultural purposes and as Paragraph 89 of the Framework sets no further qualifying criteria it would therefore be not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such there would be no requirement to further assess the effect of the agricultural storage barn on the openness of the Green Belt.
7. This proposal would not conflict with WHDP Policy GBSP1 which seeks to maintain the Green Belt as defined in the Proposals Map. As this proposal would not be restricted under the Framework I find no further policy objection to this proposal.

### **Conditions and conclusion**

8. The Council has not recommended any conditions but, other than the standard time limit for commencement, a condition specifying the relevant drawing is imposed as this provides certainty. Subject to these conditions, and for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*Jonathan Price*

INSPECTOR