



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2020

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/19/3244264

Blatches Farm, Braintree Road, Little Dunmow CM6 3AL

- 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 Alice Hawkes against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/19/2592/FUL, dated 15 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of an agricultural building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council have referred to the emerging Local Plan in their submissions. I note that the examining Inspectors recommended withdrawal of the emerging plan in their letter of the 10 January 2020. The Council had not formally responded to this recommendation at the time of my decision. Given the uncertain status of the emerging plan I have given it limited weight in determining this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and countryside.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal proposal is for a large agricultural building. It would be sited in open countryside and as a result of its height and footprint it would be highly visible as a built structure. The appellant has stated that the appeal site is located in a valley within the local area, that the external finish would help the building blend into its setting, and that the building would not be prominent, with screening from trees and limited visibility in the wider area. The building would be sited next to an existing building of similar size, and the erection of a second building in this location would result in additional built intrusion into the countryside. The combination of the existing and proposed buildings would, due to their height and footprint, result in them being an incongruous feature in their setting, and harmful to its rural character. This harm would not be

overcome by the presence of screening and siting of the building at a lower point in the landscape.

5. The appellant has further stated that the building would provide additional storage for their farming business and reduce their storage and transport costs. They have also drawn my attention to paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which amongst other things states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas, including through well-designed new buildings. From the evidence before me, the building would provide further storage capacity of approximately 4,000 tonnes. The appellant has identified a requirement for approximately 1,050 tonnes of storage due to a change in farming policy regarding fertilisers and a desire to stop using off-farm rented storage. However, no information has been provided showing the current storage needs of the farm and how these are met, or the extent of storage and transport costs currently incurred. I am therefore not convinced based on the evidence before me that the needs cannot be met by the existing building at the site, for which planning permission was granted in 2018, and any other storage associated with the farm.
6. Having regard to the above considerations, the development proposed would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and countryside. It would therefore be in conflict with Policy S7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan January 2005 (the LP), which states that planning permission will only be granted for development in the countryside that protects or enhances the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set

Other Matters

7. The appellant contends that the appeal proposal would remove the need for agricultural vehicles to travel along the B1256 and thereby prevent delays to other users of the highway. However, I do not consider that this would outweigh the harm that would arise from the development.
8. The appellant has also stated that the development proposed would not cause unacceptable disturbance to neighbouring properties, with any activities associated with the development being typical for a rural location. The absence of any identified harm from disturbance associated with the development is a neutral consideration in my determination of this appeal.
9. The reference to LP Policy GEN2 is noted. However, LP Policy S7 is considered the most relevant to this appeal.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR