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# Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 9 August 2021

**by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 07 September 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/21/3275158**

**Crowfield Farm, Yilden Road, Melchbourne, Bedfordshire, MK44 1BH**

- 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 David Bletsoe against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
- The application Ref 20/02891/FUL, dated 30 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2021.
- The development proposed is erection of new grain store and access to public highway.

## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matters

2. The Government released a revised National Planning Policy Framework in July 2021. The main parties were invited to comment on the revised document.

## Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

## Reasons

4. The store would be a prominent feature in the local landscape, with no other agricultural buildings visible in the area closer than those at the Crowfield Farm complex. It would be more than ten metres in height and would occupy a substantial footprint. While set back from the field boundary, due to its overall size it would be highly visible from the road, the public right of way crossing the field and from neighbouring land.
5. The store would be of an appearance not uncommon for agricultural buildings, with the lower walls comprising concrete panels and the upper walls and roof finished in cladding. However, due to its size and siting it would be a large and incongruous feature in the landscape, out of keeping with the largely open fields that comprise the surrounding area.
6. The creation of a new highway access and the attendant visibility splays would necessitate the relocation of an extended section of hedgerow at the front of the site. Additional tree planting would be introduced at the rear of the building but this new planting would take time to establish and provide meaningful screening. Even with the benefits of the new planting and the screening provided by the hedgerow, the store would remain highly visible in the area. It would be particularly visible from the new access with the large concrete apron in front of it an additional incongruous feature in this location.

7. The Council does not contest that there is a need for the building, and I see no reason to dispute that one exists. The benefit of the development to the appellant's business in allowing segregated storage of grain are acknowledged, and there would be an overall net biodiversity gain from the additional planting. However, these benefits would not outweigh the visual impact of the development in this location.
8. Both main parties have commented on whether an alternative siting of the proposed grain store at the existing complex of farm buildings would be preferable to the proposed. However, no detailed proposals for such a siting have been submitted with this appeal, and therefore it is a consideration that attracts very limited weight.
9. The proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies 7S, 29, 30 and 37 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. Collectively, these state that applications should give particular attention to the relationship of the development with the context in which it is placed and that development in the countryside not result in impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

### **Conclusion**

10. There are no material considerations to indicate that this appeal should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons set out above the appeal fails.

*M Chalk*

INSPECTOR