



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2025

by **D Ellis MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/25/3362612

Land On The South East Side of Ridge Road, Kempston MK42 7DA

Grid Ref Easting: 501935, Grid Ref Northing: 247158

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by AMP Clean Energy against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02428/FUL.
 - The development proposed is construction and operation of a micro energy storage project, surrounding fence and soft landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters and Main Issue

2. In addition to the main issue below, the original application was also refused on the grounds that the proposal could cause unacceptable harm to trees and that, consequently, the biodiversity net gain requirements would not be achieved. The appellant has submitted a root protection plan (drawing 'Plan 8') with their appeal documents. The Council has consequently accepted that the proposed development would be outside of the root protection areas of the surrounding trees and that a condition could be used to secure the submission and approval of a Tree Protection Plan in the event that the appeal is allowed. Subject to this condition, the Council is satisfied that the second and third reasons for refusal have been addressed. Based on the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusions on these matters.
3. As such, only the first reason for refusal remains in dispute. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of a grassed area with trees along the south side of Ridge Road. There are allotments to the rear of the grassed area, and two dwellings at one end. Trees and hedges line the northern side of Ridge Road which separates the road from the dwellings on Burr Close and Chibnall Close. Overall, the appeal site contributes positively to the open, green and pleasant appearance and character of the street.
5. The proposed energy storage unit and fence would have a moderately large footprint and would be approximately 2.4 metres in height. There is a modestly sized road sign adjacent to the appeal site and a street-light next to the dwellings to the east of the site. No other street furniture or paraphernalia is located in the

grassed area. Although the fence could be painted leaf green, due to its scale the energy storage unit and fence would fail to retain the open appearance and character of the street and, as a result, would be an obtrusive feature in the street scene. This would be exacerbated by highly prominent location of the site at the side of the road.

6. Whilst the proposed landscaping in front of the fence may partially screen the fence, the storage unit and fence would remain highly visible, particularly to people approaching the site from the east. As such the proposed landscaping would not mitigate the visual impact of the scheme.
7. For these reasons, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal would conflict with Policies 28S, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030 (2020) (LP), insofar as they require development to be of high-quality design which complements the character of the area and respects the context within which it will sit.

Other Matters

8. No substantive details have been provided of any planning approval of similar energy storage units. It is therefore unclear whether the contexts of those other schemes are similar to that before me.
9. Although no objections were raised by consultees during the original application, this is a lack of harm and is a neutral matter which does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

10. I am mindful that paragraph 168 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that significant weight should be given to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future. I also note that the proposal would accord with LP Policy 51S which requires the development of land to address climate change. However, these considerations do not outweigh the more significant weight I assign to the harm which would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. It has also not been demonstrated that these benefits could be achieved in a way that does not cause the harm identified.
11. As such, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

D Ellis

INSPECTOR