



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025

by **D Ellis MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3367395

Land North of Budna Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire

Grid Ref Easting: 514462, Grid Ref Northing: 247858

- 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 Mr Potts against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/25/00867/FULL.
 - The development is the creation of hardstanding and the erection of fences and gates around the field.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The hardstanding has already been constructed, and the fences and gates have been erected. This development corresponds to that which has been applied for and shown on the submitted drawings. At the time of the site visit there was a cabin and several vehicles on the area of hardstanding, however I have contained myself to determining the appeal before me. I have also removed the reference to a retrospective planning application from the description of development as this is not a term of development.
3. I am aware of planning history of site, including the Enforcement Notice, but that is separate to this appeal, which I am determining on its merits. The appellant has not applied for a change of use, therefore the appeal solely relates to the operational development comprising the hardstanding, fences and gates.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the development is acceptable in principle, having regard to the Council's policies on development outside settlement envelopes and the effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effect on highway safety at the site access with Budna Road and the junctions of Budna Road with St Johns Road and Thorncote Road.

Reasons

Principle of development and effect on the character and appearance of the area

5. The appeal site constitutes an agricultural field on the northern side of Budna Road. Both main parties agree that the site falls outside of any defined settlement envelope and is therefore situated in the open countryside.
6. Policy SP7 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (LP) recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and states that only particular types of development will be permitted outside of settlement envelopes. However, the hardstanding, fence and gates do not fall under any of the types of development listed in the policy.
7. The appeal site and the surrounding area are characterised by large fields divided by hedgerows and trees. This gives the area a pleasant green and open appearance which contributes positively to the rural character of the countryside.
8. The hardstanding, wire mesh fences, timber posts and galvanised gates are of a functional appearance and have created a degree of enclosure in an otherwise open setting. Although there is some screening by the existing vegetation, much of the development is visible from the road and would be more prominent during the winter months when the vegetation has shed its leaves. Overall, the scale and materials of the development have created an alien feature in the countryside which detracts from its open and rural character.
9. Accordingly, I conclude that the development harms the character and appearance of the area. It conflicts with LP Policies HQ1 and EE5, insofar as they require development to respond positively to its context, for the appearance of a development to relate well to the existing local surroundings and to reflect local character. The development also conflicts with Policy NP10 of the Northill Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031, which requires development to conserve or enhance the rural character of the countryside.
10. Since the development fails to respect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, it therefore follows that the development conflicts with LP Policy SP7. As such, it is not a suitable form of development outside of settlement envelopes.

Highway safety

11. The site access is onto Budna Road. No details regarding the visibility splays that can be achieved from the access have been provided. Whilst I saw that adequate visibility is possible to the east, visibility to the west is restricted by the bend in the road. No vehicle speed data has been provided to demonstrate whether a smaller visibility distance would be acceptable to the west. I also have no evidence before me to demonstrate that an acceptable visibility splay could be achieved using land within the public highway or land under the applicant's control.
12. The development utilises an informal access to the site which has been altered from a dirt track to hardstanding. The appellant asserts that the land is used for agricultural purposes. No change of use is proposed as part of this appeal, and no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that more vehicles are using the site now than compared to before the installation of the hardstanding, fences and gates. Whilst the Council acknowledges that the Budna Road junctions with St John's Road and Thorncote Road have substandard visibility, it has not

been demonstrated that the development has resulted in a significantly greater risk to road users at these junctions.

13. Notwithstanding this, the appellant has failed to evidence that acceptable visibility splays can be achieved, to the detriment of highway safety. The development therefore conflicts with LP Policy T2, insofar as it requires development to not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and to provide safe and convenient access.

Conclusion

14. I therefore conclude that the development 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