
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2025

by Jennifer Wallace BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3373966

1 Fen End, Stotfold, Central Bedfordshire SG5 4BA

- 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 J Little of JSJ Roofing Ltd against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/25/01902/FULL.
 - The development proposed is erection of 4no commercial units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development set out above is taken from the application form. The responses in the application form refer to the floorspace as being in B8 use, and that there may be B1 and B2 industrial or commercial processes and machinery. The plans refer to industrial buildings and the accompanying details refer to commercial and industrial uses interchangeably. Given these, and the terminology in the Use Classes Order, this results in a lack of clarity as to what is meant by the description of development.
3. The Council's officer report refers to the erection of 4 commercial units in B2/B8 use. The appellant's statement refers to the proposal retaining the allocated B2/B8 use. I have therefore assessed the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would have an acceptable effect on highway safety.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a cleared site on the junction of Fen End and Astwick Road. Fen End is a no through road which serves a small employment area, comprised of modest buildings in a range of commercial and employment uses. Parking and servicing space for the buildings is relatively limited for employment and commercial uses. I did not observe any parking restriction on Fen End. While my site visit represents only a short moment in time, there was a moderate degree of parking along Fen End, albeit this was away from the appeal site.
6. Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (July 2021) (LP) Policy T2 is clear that proposals for new development must make adequate provision for loading and unloading, circulation, servicing and vehicle turning. It is not in dispute that the site

would not provide sufficient space for a 16.5m heavy goods vehicle (HGV) to turn within the site. Nor is there sufficient space within the turning head of Fen End for a HGV to turn. While the proposal is for relatively modest units, they are proposed for B2/B8 use, where there is a reasonable likelihood of HGVs visiting the premises.

7. The appellant has provided swept path drawings which demonstrate that a HGV would be capable of reversing into the site and leaving in a forward gear. This manoeuvre would undoubtedly hamper the movement of traffic along Fen End, adversely affecting the operation of the highway. There is also an increased risk to highway safety arising from such reversing manoeuvres, particularly given the length of HGVs.
8. Making provision for such turning space would affect the quantum of development that could be delivered on the site. However, there is no evidence before me to demonstrate there is any shortfall in the provision of employment land. While efficient use should be made of land, this should not be at the expense of highway safety.
9. The site is within a designated employment area and has previously been in employment use. Other uses within the employment area may not be able to accommodate HGV access. Irrespective, this proposal must be assessed against the policies of the development plan in force today so this would not alter my conclusion as to the effect of the proposal on the operation of the highway and its safety. Nor would the appellant's anecdotal evidence as to the operation of the industrial estate and how they anticipate the proposed development would operate. There is no certainty that future occupiers would have the same highways operating practices as other occupiers in the area.
10. While the Council's officer report and highways comments to the appeal refer to concerns with the servicing arrangements within the site, this did not form part of their reason for refusal. However, even if I were to find the proposed arrangements were acceptable, this would be at best a neutral matter as development is expected to make adequate provision for parking and servicing.
11. I therefore find the proposal would not have an acceptable effect on highway safety. This would be contrary to LP Policy T2 which requires development to not have a detrimental effect on highway safety.

Other Matters

12. The appeal site lies within a Minor Service Centre and so is well located for it to be accessed by means other than the private car. The LP has an objectively assessed need for 24,000 new jobs to be delivered. Designated employment land, including the appeal site, is required to meet this need. It is not in dispute that the proposal would not conflict with LP Policy EMP1 and I have no reason to reach a different conclusion. While there would be a benefit from the increased employment opportunities, I attach only limited weight to this as the number of jobs the site could create is unknown.
13. There is an extant permission¹ for the erection of an industrial building and B8 open storage on the site. I have no reason to consider this permission would not

¹ CB/19/04144/FULL

be carried out if this appeal were to be dismissed and it therefore represents a realistic fallback position. However, I do not have full details of that proposal before me. I therefore cannot be certain of the effect of that proposal on highway safety such that it would justify allowing this permission in light of the harms I have identified.

14. I have been directed to another appeal decision elsewhere within the authority. However from the submitted layout plan, the highways circumstances were significantly different to those before me and so would not alter my assessment of this proposal.

Conclusion

15. The appeal proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate the decision should be taken otherwise. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jennifer Wallace

INSPECTOR