



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2025

by **D Ellis MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3372822

Mouse Farm, Shefford Road, Clophill, Central Bedfordshire MK45 4BT

- 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 Michael Hawkins against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/25/01424/FULL.
 - The development proposed is erection of a detached self-build dwelling with garage and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area and the countryside; and
 - biodiversity.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is in a back-land position to the rear of a new housing development on the northern side of Shefford Road. The development consists of four detached two-storey dwellings nearest to Shefford Road, with a detached bungalow and single-storey garage to the rear of the new dwelling on Plot 4. The appeal site is outside of the settlement envelope, with countryside lying beyond the housing development. The site is in landscape area 6B Mid Greensand Ridge, and the Council's landscape officer also acknowledges potential cumulative landscape and visual impacts arising from additional development at this site.
4. Along the northern side of Shefford Road, the dwellings are typically one or two-deep from the road. The single-storey bungalow and garage are situated further to the north than the adjacent buildings, and their position between the two-storey dwelling on Plot 4 and the countryside provides a visual step-down and transition between the built-up area and the countryside. Overall, the housing development together with the openness of the appeal site contribute positively to the semi-rural character of the settlement and to the surrounding countryside.
5. The proposed dwelling would project further into the countryside than the bungalow and would be situated beyond the adjacent dwelling at 45 Shefford Road. The two-storey nature of the dwelling would not follow the bungalow's visual

step-down and transition to the countryside. Although only glimpses of the proposed dwelling would be visible from public vantage points along Shefford Road, the substantial bulk and massing of the proposed dwelling would detract from the openness of the area and would result in residential encroachment into the countryside.

6. Dwellings in Fullers Field, Jacques Lane and Hawthorne Close result in the built-up area extending much further to the south of Shefford Lane than that to the north. As such, the context of the new residential development on the opposite side of Shefford Road to the appeal site is not directly comparable to the appeal scheme.
7. I acknowledge the proposed development would therefore cause harm to the semi-rural and open character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies SP7, EE5, HQ1 and HQ8 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (LP). These policies seek, amongst other things, to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and landscape, for development to reflect local character and distinctiveness in terms of scale and pattern of the surrounding landscape and existing settlement form, for development to respond positively to its context and relate well to the local surroundings, and for back-land development to not go against the existing pattern and grain of development or to harm the character and appearance of the area.

Biodiversity

8. The proposal is for a self-build dwelling. However, I have no mechanism before me, such as a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), to secure the new dwelling as a self-build property. As such I am unable to conclude that the proposal would meet the self-build exemption to the general biodiversity gain condition.
9. The Preliminary Ecological Assessment dated November 2024 identifies Modified Grassland and Sparsely Vegetated Urban Land at the appeal site. Notwithstanding this, no site-specific biodiversity values or metrics have been submitted, nor has any mechanism been provided to secure on- or off-site biodiversity gain. Even if ecological or landscape enhancements could be secured by a condition, I therefore have no evidence before me to demonstrate that the proposal could achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain.
10. The proposal would therefore conflict with LP Policies EE2 and EE8, insofar as they seek biodiversity enhancements.

Other Matters

11. The Council has not raised any objections to the principle of the proposed development and based on the evidence before me I have no reason to disagree. However, this does not alter the harms identified above. I note that the pre-application advice for an amended two-storey dwelling on the appeal site¹ also raises no objection to the principle of development but does raise concerns regarding character and appearance.

¹ Application no. CB/25/02478/PAPC

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. The Council accepts that it can currently demonstrate a 4.85-year supply of housing sites. This is below the minimum level required and with reference to paragraph 11 d) of the Framework, consideration of the presumption in favour of sustainable development is needed.
13. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, and it has not been demonstrated that a 10% biodiversity net gain could be achieved. It would, therefore, conflict with LP policies SP7, EE2, EE5, EE8, HQ1 and HQ8 in these regards.
14. The provision of one additional unit would make a small contribution to the existing supply. Economic advantages would also arise from the construction and occupation of a new house, although these would be limited by the scale of the scheme. The proposal would also provide a self-build dwelling, although there is no mechanism before me to secure the dwelling as self-build. For these reasons, these benefits would be modest.
15. The proposal would conflict with LP policies SP7, EE2, EE5, EE8, HQ1 and HQ8. I am satisfied that these conflicts mean that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole. These policies are generally consistent with the Framework and so these conflicts carry substantial weight.
16. The proposal would not conflict with the Framework's policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance and therefore paragraph 11d)i) of the Framework does not apply in this case.
17. However, 11d)ii) should be applied. This requires planning permission to be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land including through the use of previously-developed land and securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
18. The proposed development would be supported by parts of the Framework, including policies to increase housing supply. The proposal would contribute towards the provision of self-build housing and would also support economic growth. However, there would also be conflict with parts of the Framework, including policies to achieve well-designed places and to make effective use of land.
19. In my view, the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, the proposal would not constitute sustainable development with regard to paragraph 11 d ii) of the Framework.
20. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would cause me to determine this appeal otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Ellis INSPECTOR