
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2016

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 31 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/16/3153409

3 Meadsway, Slindon, West Sussex BN18 0QU

- 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 Graham Ball against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/16/00161/HOUS, dated 13 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is hard standing and driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for hard standing and driveway at 3 Meadsway, Slindon, West Sussex BN18 0QU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SDNP/16/00161/HOUS, dated 13 January 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - i) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - ii) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Plan A and Plan B.
 - iii) No development shall take place until details of the proposed surfacing material for the driveway hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council, in its decision notice, refers to Policies 1, 9 and 50 of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (the SDNPPMP) to which I have applied some weight due to its role in supporting the relevant development plan policies.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Slindon Conservation Area (the CA) and conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park.
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Reasons

4. The CA is characterised by a variety of designs and ages of buildings, primarily residential. The older, more traditional buildings are generally to the north of Meadsway and mainly positioned fairly close to the road. Those properties relating to Meadsway are more modern and set well back from the main road through the village, around a large area of grassed open space with a number of trees within it. It is that pleasant verdant and open character, also reflected by the presence of an undeveloped field on the opposite side of the main through road, which gives this part of the CA its distinctiveness and provides a pleasing setting for the more intimate nature of the older part to the north.
5. Due to the site's location within the CA, special attention has to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. I have also had regard to paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which requires that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.
6. The main body of the open space relating to Meadsway is contained in the area between that road and the main through road. It is this space which provides the key element of the distinct open character, particularly when seen from the through road. The grassed areas between the road in Meadsway and the houses contribute to that openness. However, those areas are of varying depth and already bisected to some degree by narrow footways and an access road serving garages to the rear of properties in the north-east corner of the Meadsway grouping. Furthermore, car parking is generally on-street, including in laybys, which is a dominant feature of the streetscene and which contributes to a fairly distinct break between the larger area of open space and that space directly in front of the dwellings and there is some evidence of parking on the grass, including worn verges. Evidence submitted by the appellant further illustrates that situation.
7. Although the grassed space between the road and No 3 contributes to the sense of openness, it is a fairly narrow strip at that point and so the introduction of a driveway would only occupy a relatively small area of that space and so would not be a dominant feature. The parking of cars on a hardstanding directly in front of the house would be contrary to the existing situation generally in the street. However, the parking area would only be across part of the house frontage and so would be unlikely to dominate the house. From the through road it would also be seen in the context of cars parked in fairly close proximity along Meadsway, with the main central open space undisturbed and still to the fore. The degree of prominence of the hardstanding area and associated parking would also be reduced to a degree due to the set back of No 3 relative to the adjacent No 2.
8. I have had regard to a concern about a precedent being set by the proposal if allowed. However, there are particular circumstances relating to this proposal, including the depth of the strip of open space the drive would cross and the amount of space in front of the house to enable parking, that are not necessarily the same for other properties. In any case, any subsequent application would need to be considered on its planning merits, as I have done in this case, based on the circumstances at the time.
9. For the above reasons, the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and conserve the landscape and scenic

beauty of the National Park. As such, it would accord with Saved Policies AREA2 and GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan and Policies 1, 9 and 50 of the SDNPPMP which together, in respect of this issue, require development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of CAs, to be of high quality design and layout, and to protect the natural beauty and special qualities of the landscape and its setting. It would also accord with section 12 of the Framework which relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and would not conflict with the statutory first purpose of the South Downs National Park which relates to conserving and enhancing its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.

10. The Council, in its officer report, also raises concern that insufficient manoeuvring space for cars might pose a problem. However, I have received no substantive evidence to support that concern, including in respect of highway safety. I have therefore given little weight to this factor.
11. The Council has suggested three conditions that it considers would be appropriate were I minded to allow the appeal. I have considered these in the light of advice in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance and amended some of the wording.
12. The standard time condition is required in this case and for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans would also be required. In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the CA, a condition to secure details of the proposed surface materials for the driveway would be necessary.
13. I note that the Parish Council have raised a point about ensuring that there would be no disruption to parking during construction of the proposal. However, due to the small scale nature of the proposed development, it would be unlikely to cause material disruption in this respect and I have not received any substantive evidence to the contrary.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR