
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/16/3153640

Lomer Cottage, Lomer Lane, Warnford, Hampshire SO32 3LJ

- 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 Preshaw Farm Estate against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/16/00858/HOUS, dated 19 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is extend the existing cottage at ground to provide a new kitchen to meet current building standards and at first floor to include a new master bedroom and en-suite bathroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to extend the existing cottage at ground to provide a new kitchen to meet current building standards and at first floor to include a new master bedroom and en-suite bathroom at Lomer Cottage, Lomer Lane, Warnford, Hampshire SO32 3LJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SDNP/16/00858/HOUS, dated 19 February 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - i) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - ii) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - iii) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1706-003 Rev.J (Proposed Elevations), 1706-004 Rev.G (Proposed Plans & Section), 1706-004 (Block Plan).
 - iv) No development/demolition or site preparation shall take place until the the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation work has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No demolition/development or site preparation shall take place other than in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The Written Scheme of Investigation shall include:
 - an assessment of significance and research questions;
 - the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;
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- provision for post investigation assessment, reporting and dissemination;
- provision to be made for deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation (archive) and for the submission of a post archaeological fieldwork report that shall be produced in accordance with an approved programme including, where appropriate, post-excavation assessment, specialist analysis and reports and publication.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the stock of small or more affordable dwellings in the countryside.

Reasons

3. Saved Policy CE.23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review (the WDLPR) states that within the countryside the extension of dwellings will be permitted provided that it would not reduce the stock of small (1 or 2 bedroom) or more affordable dwellings in the countryside. The supporting text to that policy explains the context as being a need for a mix of dwelling sizes and types in the countryside, to retain variety in the housing stock, and that there is an oversupply of large detached dwellings in the countryside. The South Downs National Park Authority (the SDNPA) therefore seeks to retain and restrict increases in the size of existing dwellings of less than 120 square metres (sqm) floor area, with extensions normally limited to no more than 25% of the existing, whatever the number of bedrooms. The supporting text goes on to say that there will, however, be particular concern to retain the smaller more affordable dwellings of 1 or 2 bedrooms, that are in short supply throughout the District, to meet local needs.
4. The existing dwelling is a 3 bedroom property, albeit that the third bedroom is small and the overall floorspace is less than 120 sqm. It is therefore not classed as being a small dwelling in terms of policy CE.23 which refers to such as having only 1 or 2 bedrooms.
5. I have had regard to the proposal involving more than a 25% increase in floor area. However, the dwelling is on a large plot of land which is likely to exaggerate its current value. Therefore, despite its fairly small existing floor area, it is less likely to be as affordable as other similar sized houses on more average sized plots. Instead, it is more likely to have a value similar to slightly larger, relatively less affordable dwellings.
6. I acknowledge that the appellant disputes the weight that should be afforded to policy CE.23, and in this respect I have taken account of the little weight afforded to it by my colleague in Appeal Decision Ref APP/Y9507/A/13/2206411. Nevertheless, for the above reasons, the proposal would in any case not cause unacceptable harm to the stock of small or more affordable dwellings in the countryside. As such, it would accord with policy CE.23 of the WDLPR.
7. The site is located within the South Downs National Park. Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. In this case, the SDNPA has not raised any concerns in this respect and I have no reason to

consider otherwise in terms of the proposal's compatible design with that of the existing house and its surroundings.

8. I have also had regard to the social benefit that would arise from the proposal creating an improved living environment for the occupiers, particularly in terms of safer stairway access to the first floor and better associated circulation space. This factor adds some additional weight in favour of the proposed development.
9. The SDNPA 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. 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. A condition to ensure that the materials proposed to be used in the construction of the external surfaces match those used in the existing building would also be necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
10. I also note that the SDNPA's Historic Environment Officer highlights that the site has the potential to adversely affect buried heritage assets, or archaeological remains, which might relate to a deserted medieval settlement, a documented 17th century building on or close to the site of the existing building, and potentially also prehistoric/Romano remains, given their wide distribution around the application site. However, it is also highlighted that previous ground levelling and terracing is likely to have adversely affected such remains. As such, and acknowledging that there is nevertheless still archaeological potential at the site, I consider it necessary, as recommended by that officer, to secure by condition the recording and reporting of any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed works, in order to mitigate the effect of the proposal on any heritage assets.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR