



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2022

by C Shearing BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/21/3278886

7 Luffs Meadow, Northchapel, Petworth, West Sussex GU28 9HN

- 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 and Mrs Goodwin against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/21/00587/HOUS, dated 2 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'retention of home office built 2020 retrospective application.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the course of the appeal the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. There are no substantive changes relevant to the appeal before me and therefore no interested parties would be prejudiced by my consideration of the 2021 version of the Framework.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, with specific regard to the South Downs National Park (SDNP) designation.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within a residential cul de sac where the extent of set back of buildings from the road, spacing between them and generous front gardens garner a pleasant sense of spaciousness to the street scene. This spaciousness is part of the landscape character and forms an important part of the relationship between the edge of the settlement and the open countryside beyond. Properties in the street are predominantly brick, but exist in groups of varying design and character.
5. The development sits notably forward of the front building line of the property and extends into the front garden area. While views of the development from the west are screened to some degree by the boundary fence, the development is prominent in views from the roads to the east and south. Its prominence within the street scene is accentuated by its materials, including timber cladding, which are in stark contrast with the main building and the other properties within the street. In combination, these attributes result in a

- development which intrudes on and accordingly erodes the spacious feel of the street scene.
6. I understand the development replaced two sheds. However, I understand these were smaller in size and had a different relationship to the property and as such, the street. I do not therefore consider them to be comparable to the appeal scheme.
 7. There are other extensions and alterations to nearby properties, which include a timber clad side extension to the attached property, No 8. That said, by reason of its positioning, this addition has a materially different impact on the character of the street than the appeal scheme. While mobile homes in some front gardens locally obscure some local views of the development, these are temporary and moveable structures and as such they do not have a permanent impact on the character of the area, nor provide permanent screening for the development.
 8. The development therefore causes harm to the character and appearance of the area and, by association fails to comply with the first statutory purpose of the South Downs National Park designation, which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. As such the development is contrary to Policies SD1, SD4, SD5 and SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan 2019 (the LP) insofar as they require high quality design which respects the character of the area. It would also conflict with the design objectives of the Framework.
 9. On the basis of the information before me, I do not find conflict with Policy SD6 of the LP which relates to the safeguarding of key views within the National Park as the views of the development in this instance are localised.

Other Matters

10. Based on the evidence before me I am unable to conclude whether the development complies with the 30% floorspace threshold which forms part of Policy SD31, which seeks to avoid the over-extension of dwellings. However, the development is in conflict with Policy SD31 in any event as it does not respect the character of the local area.
11. As the building is used for purposes ancillary to the main house, and has no openings in its western side, I find the use would not cause harm to the living conditions of the occupants of the neighbouring properties in terms of noise. The proposal does therefore not conflict with LP Policy SD7 in terms of its impact on tranquillity, nor the objectives of the Framework in respect of noise.
12. In addition, the Authority have not identified harm to the setting of the Northchapel Conservation Area which neighbours the appeal site to the north. Based on my assessment and site visit, due to the scale and siting of the development, I find that it would preserve the setting of the Conservation Area. These matters are neutral considerations and are not afforded weight.

Conclusion

13. The development would be contrary to the development plan as a whole and this conflict is not outweighed by other material considerations. That are worthy of sufficient weight, in this instance. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

C Shearing

INSPECTOR