

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 July 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/22/3294511

129 Myrtlegrove, Long Furlough Lane, Patching, Worthing, BN13 3XL

- 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 & Mrs N McLaren against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority (NPA).
 - The application Ref SDNP/21/05392/HOUS, dated 25 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is the removal of conservatory and outhouse and in their place erection of two-storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of conservatory and outhouse and in their place erection of two-storey extension at 129 Myrtlegrove, Long Furlough Lane, Patching, Worthing, BN13 3XL in accordance with the terms of the application Ref SDNP/21/05392/HOUS, dated 25 October 2021, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Preliminary matters

2. The comprehensive officer report deals with several matters of significance including the principle of development¹; the proposal's compliance with local policy designed to avoid the loss of small to medium sized dwellings; the effect on neighbouring living conditions; impact on dark night skies, and ecology. The NPA considers in these respects that subject to appropriate mitigation, the proposal would be acceptable. I have no reason to disagree with the NPA's assessment on these issues, and therefore I need not consider them further.

Main issue

3. Having regard to the above, and the thrust of the NPA's sole reason for refusal, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, and another pair is sited closely to the east. The dwelling, on rising ground, is reached by a track which runs through a sizeable group of buildings, which appear to include farm buildings, commercial workshops and other dwellings. Close to the appeal

¹ Having regard to the property's location outside a designated settlement boundary

- property's boundaries are several sets of stables, including a commercial livery. To the west of the appeal property, but removed from it, a public right of way (PROW) runs north-south, through gated or stiled paddocks.
5. A full description of the property and its attached neighbour is provided in the Design and Access Statement, and this is largely repeated in the officer report. The pair was built as farm workers cottages at the turn of the 19/20th century. They are not designated as local heritage assets, but the NPA, notwithstanding the more recent ground floor additions to both properties, consider them to comprise reasonably good examples of West Sussex character cottages found within the Park.
 6. I share the NPA's view that some features make the cottages attractive, including the balanced disposition of prominent gables, chimneys, materials and roof shapes. However, the original appearance and distinction of the pair has been considerably devalued over time in particular by the substantial, ill-fitting additions at the front and side, and the introduction of inappropriate fenestration materials.
 7. I view the removal of the conservatory at the side of the dwelling as a considerable benefit of the scheme and the outbuilding's removal as proposed would reduce the level of local clutter.
 8. To my mind, the extension's design pays particular regard to and respects the original features of the host property. The reduced ridge height, proposed gable treatment, and the 'T' shape of the extension would in my view ensure that it would be read as an acceptably designed proportionate addition, and not perceived as creating a terracing effect as feared by the NPA. Whilst noting the NPA's comments on symmetry, that quality has already been significantly eroded by the more modern additions.
 9. The proposed gable in the west elevation and its associated well-proportioned fenestration would act as an attractive, well-designed replacement for the extant conservatory.
 10. I walked part of the PROW to the west, and noted that views of the dwelling are partially curtailed by the presence of intervening buildings. From those vantage points where the extension would be clearly seen, I strongly suspect that it would be perceived by most people as entirely acceptable in terms of scale and design.
 11. The Framework² provides that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, and that the scale and extent of development within the Parks should be limited. I am satisfied that the scale of the proposed development is so modest and limited that it would not harm the scenic beauty of the Park, whose landscape would therefore be conserved.
 12. I conclude that the proposed development would sit acceptably in its visual and spatial context without harming the character and appearance of the host property or its surroundings. Accordingly, I find no conflict with those provisions of policies SD4, SD5 and SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-

² National Planning Policy Framework

2033, and policy PLACES 5 of the Patching Neighbourhood Development Plan (2018) directed to ensuring that development, including house extensions, is of a high quality of design and that the Parks landscape is conserved.

Conditions

13. I shall impose the standard conditions in respect of materials and the approved plan references in the interests of visual amenity and certainty. The NPA has suggested 3 additional conditions in relation to Bat Protection, Dark Night Skies mitigation and Ecosystem Services. I consider all three to be necessary and relevant, and are therefore imposed, albeit in a slightly modified manner, for the same reasons as provided by the NPA.

Other matters

14. I have taken account of all other matters raised in the representations but none outweighs those considerations which led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1). The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2). The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the following approved plans: Ref: 801/SU100 Rev A; 801/PL100 Rev C; 801/PL101; 801/PL200 Rev B & the OS location plan.
- 3). 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.
- 4). Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures set out in Section 5.4 Outline mitigation measures of the Bat Survey Report by The Ecology Co-op Ltd (September 2021) unless varied by a Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) or European Protected Species (EPS) licence issued by Natural England. Thereafter, the replacement bat roost features and enhancements shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.
- 5). Prior to the development hereby permitted being brought into beneficial use, the roof light window shall be fitted with low transmittance film and an automated black out blind, and shall be permanently retained in that condition thereafter.
- 6). The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in accordance with the actions set out in section 3 of submitted Ecosystems Services Statement produced by JaneJones-Warner Associates and received by the local planning authority on 27 October 2021.