

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2022

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/22/3302087

Street Farm Cottage, Green Lane, Jevington, Polegate, BN26 5QD

- 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 Punter against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/22/00553/HOUS, dated 25 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, infill extension to side and insertion of windows at first floor to rear elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the locality and b) housing mix within the National Park.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is an unadorned detached 3 bedroom house with a detached garage and a detached outbuilding used as a utility room. The plot is substantial. It is located at the edge of a small cluster of various homes, outside of a defined settlement boundary, and within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). Open landscape predominates locally, the area is an attractive one with established rural character, and rights of way are in close proximity to the appeal property. The proposal is as described above.
 4. To my mind the single storey extension, significant in projection and running the whole width of the property, would appear as excessively sized and bereft of necessary design subtlety. Even finished in matching materials the new structure would lack subservience and look ungainly, particularly given the limited depth of the existing property. Notwithstanding the existence locally of trees, the scheme would be able to be seen from vantage points open to the public. Furthermore, with or without wide views towards a development the principles of good design should apply and in this instance the block-like unrelated nature of this extension would not accord with such principles. The house would look awkwardly over-extended by reason of the scale and nature of the planned rear projection.
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5. I conclude that the scheme would impinge upon the rural character of the area, its landscape qualities and public views. There would thus be conflict with South Downs Local Plan (LP) Policies SD5, SD6 and SD31 which taken together and amongst other matters embody controls seeking sympathetic architectural design and limitations on scale of extensions. There would not be overall protection of the SDNP with a failure to conserve and enhance its landscape qualities and scenic beauty.

Housing Mix

6. LP Policy SD31, which I touch on above, seeks to prevent the floorspace of an existing dwelling by more than approximately 30% unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Authority's relevant Technical Advice Note (Extensions and Replacement Dwellings, July 2021) explains the reasoning for this as a) to reduce the loss of small and medium homes and b) to protect landscape qualities (as above). This second main issue relates to a).
7. Whilst I can take the Appellants' point that this is not a grandiose scheme neither they nor I would challenge the Authority's definition of this home as presently in the small/medium category nor its figures which show something slightly above a 50% percent increase in floor area via the appeal proposals. I do fully appreciate that the 30% figure is to be treated as an 'approximate', that first floor accommodation would not increase, that circumstances here are a little different from the norm given the small-holding needs, and that there could well be an argument for some flexibility given these factors and that some of the new floor area would be embodied 'within' the existing built mass to the side. Nevertheless, in my opinion the scheme would take this property too far out of the small/medium normal definition.
8. To this end there would be adverse impact upon the range of properties available in the National Park and I conclude that there would be unacceptable conflict with LP Policy SD31.

Other matters

9. I fully understand that refurbishment is called for on this property and the way in which the small-holding business to an extent dictates the type of accommodation which ought to be embodied in any works. I can see that the Appellants have sought to engage with the Authority and the Parish Council and included some plan amendments as a result. I note the plea to be dealt with as an exceptional case but regrettably, as I outline above, I feel it would not be appropriate to allow the scale and design of development sought in this instance by the Appellants. I recognise that elsewhere 'permitted development' rights would be a feature to consider but, as the Appellants fairly acknowledge, not here within the National Park. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issues identified above.
10. I confirm that all relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have undue adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality and

upon the housing mix within the National Park. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR