



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2022

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/22/3310257

Halfway, Ditchling Road, Clayton, West Sussex, BN6 9PH.

- 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 Mrs Paula Ticker against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/22/03791/HOUS, dated 11 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is retrospective permission for 3 No gable windows and proposed blackout blinds.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for retrospective permission for 3 No gable windows and proposed blackout blinds at Halfway, Ditchling Road, Clayton, West Sussex, BN6 9PH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SDNP/22/03791/HOUS, dated 11 August 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, drawings: 22039/2.01 and 2.02.
 - 2) Within 3 months of the date of this permission details of the proposed blackout blinds, their installation and automated control system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Within 3 months of that written approval the blackout blinds shall be installed as approved and permanently retained in that condition thereafter.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be whether the proposed gable windows would conserve and enhance the landscape character and special qualities of the South Downs National Park.

Reasons

3. Halfway is located in an isolated rural location within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). It is accessed off a track shared with a public footpath and surrounded by agricultural fields. Due to its location, three-dimensional form and scale it is prominent in the landscape, including open views from surrounding footpaths and the Jack and Jill windmills on higher ground.
4. Retrospective planning permission is sought for the retention of high-level glazing to three gables on the south, east and west elevations of the dwelling.

Planning permission is also sought for the subsequent addition of automated blackout blinds to the three glazed gables.

5. The SDNP has been designated an International Dark Night Skies Reserve (DNSR). Accordingly, light pollution associated with new development is to be carefully controlled within sensitive areas, more particularly one of the core zones of the DNSR. I understand from the Authority's evidence that the appeal site is located within a Dark Night Skies Intrinsic Zone of Darkness.
6. The Authority is satisfied that, subject to detailed approval, automated blackout blinds fitted with light sensors set for sun set and sun rise operation could remove the harmful impact of the proposed gable glazing on the DNSR. This is a matter that if I were minded to allow the appeal could be conditioned as suggested by the authority. From what I have seen and read I would not form a contrary view.
7. The design of the existing dwelling is a composite mix of traditional vernacular design with significant elements of contemporary design detailing. These elements include, amongst other things, full height glazing at first floor level and first floor level expressed steel framed balconies etc. Accordingly, in my judgement the glazing of the three gables would be completely appropriate in the context of the overall design of the dwelling.
8. Furthermore, while not necessarily vernacular elements of residential design, based on what I saw on site I do not consider that, as suggested by the Authority, the glazed gables appear as either suburban features or dominant elements in the overall design of the dwelling.
9. In addition, based on the limited evidence provided and as certified non-reflective glass is proposed I am not persuaded that the glazed gables would necessarily result in glint or glare as suggested, even when observed from distant vantage points.
10. For all these reasons I do not consider that the gable glazing would cause harm to the dwelling or the landscape. Indeed, in my opinion the proposed glazing detail would serve to lift what otherwise might appear as an otherwise somewhat bland vernacular design.
11. For the reasons set out I conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed gable windows would serve to conserve and enhance the landscape character and special qualities of the South Downs National Park. The development, therefore subject to the installation of automated black out blinds would accord with the objectives of Policies SD4, SD5 and SD6 of the South Downs Local Plan (Adopted 2 July 2019 (2014-33) (LP), the National Planning Policy Framework and the first purpose of National Park Authority. As they require, amongst other things, architectural design to be sympathetic and appropriate to its setting and development to conserve and enhance the landscape character and special qualities of the National Park.

Conditions

12. The conditions follow from those suggested by the Authority. To avoid light pollution I shall require all three gables to be fitted with automated black out blinds.

13. In the interests of certainty, I shall impose a condition requiring the development to be completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Conclusions

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR