



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 May 2025

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/24/3355510

**Glebe House, Pitlands Lane and Piglegged Road, Up Marden,
West Sussex PO18 9JR**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Ablewhite against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/24/01769/HOUS.
 - The development proposed is a single-storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Officer Report treats the appeal building as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). However, this appears to be an officer decision for the purposes of assessing the proposal. There is nothing to indicate that the plan making body has formally considered any evidence and identified the property as a NDHA.
3. The Planning Policy Guidance advises that it is important that decisions to identify NDHAs are based on sound evidence. Even where a NDHA is identified during the decision-making process this would usually be due to particular evidence or investigations. I have not been presented with any substantive evidence or information to support the contention that the building should be considered a NDHA. Accordingly, I have not based my decision on the building being a NDHA.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building and in particular whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Up Marden Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The site is within the Up Marden Conservation Area (UMCA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
6. The UMCA encompasses a ribbon of properties loosely aligned on a north/south axis. From what I saw, the individual buildings display a traditional range of architectural styles and external materials and have an uncluttered informality in

their layout. This is enhanced by mature planting and the landscape in and around individual properties which contributes to the rural ambience.

7. Therefore, insofar as it relates to this appeal, the UMCA derives some of its significance from the quality of the spaces in and around the conservation area, as well as the aesthetic value in the quality of the buildings, their architecture and appearance.
8. The appeal building is a sizable, part brick/part flint two storey detached dwelling. It is one of only a limited number of buildings within the UMCA and its appearance and external materials are reflective of other buildings within the conservation area. Consequently, it contributes positively to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area and its significance as a heritage asset in relation to this appeal.
9. The proposal would involve infilling the central gap between the two existing front gables on the building. The extension would be single storey and be of a flat roof design. Its impression would be tempered slightly by being set just behind the line of the existing gable projections.
10. Whilst there is no distinct building line, the road facing elevations within the conservation area are an important and sensitive feature. However, the flat roof of the design is not a characteristic of the appeal property, dwellings in the vicinity, or indeed the conservation area. The introduction of an incongruous flat roof on the sensitive front elevation would jar against the existing more traditional architecture. It would also bring part of the footprint of the dwelling further forward and even allowing for the removal of the existing off-set central window, it would disturb the composition of the front elevation of the building itself.
11. The existing dwelling is set behind a flint wall and wider views of the extension would be limited but it would nonetheless still be possible to secure views of the property and the extension from the public realm. I acknowledge that the building's front gables would still be legible, but the proposal would nevertheless fail to either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.
12. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given that the proposal would be of a relatively small scale, I find the harm to the conservation area to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
13. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. There would be improvements to the internal living arrangements, but these would be a private benefit to the appellants. Any economic benefits associated with the works would be short term and of limited weight. The appellants have not advanced any public benefits, and I do not find that those which exist would be capable of outweighing the harm.
14. The development would therefore conflict with the Framework and policies SD1, SD4, SD5, SD12, SD15 and SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan 2019 which, amongst other things, require developments to respect local character through

good design generally but in historic environments to safeguard heritage assets and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the building and the UMCA, and as there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan and the Framework, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR