



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: 20 June 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3358830

Land at Middleham, Lewes Road, Ringmer BN8 5EY

- 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 Stavri against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/24/01958/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a stable block and access track.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for stable block and access track at Land at Middleham, Lewes Road, Ringmer BN8 5EY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SDNP/24/01958/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on a) the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the landscape of the area; and b) the nearby heritage assets.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The site comprises part of an existing field on the south-western fringes of the village of Ringmer. It is situated outside the settlement boundary and so it is, in policy terms, in the countryside. The site is also within the South Downs National Park, which has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
4. The surrounding countryside is mainly characterised by the undulating landform and irregular shaped fields partly bounded by mature hedgerows and trees. This verdant appearance contributes positively to the local landscape character and setting of Ringmer.
5. Through policies SD1, SD4, SD6 and SD7 of the South Downs Local Plan 2019 (SDLP) the Council seeks to uphold the purposes of the National Park, preserve the visual integrity, identity and scenic qualities of the Park, as well as its relative tranquillity.
6. Policy SD24 does permit equestrian development where, amongst other things, it is of a scale and/or intensity of equestrian use compatible with the landscape and special qualities of the National Park, responds to local character and is adjacent to existing buildings whilst respecting the amenities of surrounding properties.

7. Whilst new built form will be introduced into this previously undeveloped site, it would be positioned adjacent to an existing menage, and the structure would be single storey. Externally the elevations would be of timber and the roof would utilise black metal sheeting, giving the building a simple, utilitarian appearance. It would have a rural and equestrian character, not uncommon in countryside locations such as this one.
8. Due to the sloping topography, the stables would require the land to be levelled but provided this is done from the lowest point of the building so that the land is not built up, the surrounding mature planting and vegetation would obscure wider views of the structure. If it were to be seen from the west, views would be limited and the rising land and trees would act as a backdrop, limiting the prominence of the building.
9. While the building is not small, the U-shaped layout and arrangement would assist in containing the built form and so limiting the opportunities for the full extent of the built form to be seen. The building would also help to shield the parking area from wider viewpoints. Overall, it would not harm the general rural agricultural character of the area.
10. The access to the stables would utilise a similar route to that of the existing unmade track which provides access to the field. Its alignment close to the existing trees would limit the extent to which the track would be seen. The submitted arboricultural assessment has indicated that the track would not have an adverse effect upon the trees. The Council has not disputed these findings.
11. Provided the detailed construction, which could be controlled by condition, were the minimum necessary to allow vehicular access, the proposed woodchip surfacing would further assist the assimilation of the works into the existing environment.
12. Given the nature of the proposal, the additional vehicle movements would be modest. This would not harm the tranquillity of the surroundings nor the capacity of the local road network.
13. Taking all of the above into account, the level of change would not be significant and would integrate with the prevailing landscape character of the area. It would therefore not harm the character and appearance of the area and so would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park.
14. Consequently, there would not be conflict with SDLP Policies SD1, SD4, SD5, SD6 and SD24 which, amongst other things, seek to ensure developments preserve the visual integrity, identity, scenic qualities and purposes of the Park, as well as its relative tranquillity.

Heritage Assets

15. Middleham is a Grade II Listed Building. I must therefore have regard to section (66)1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special regard be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.
16. It is an 18th century white brick and slate roofed two storey dwelling. Its stringcourse, quoins, glazing bars and its columned porch are its defining features. The building appeared to be in good condition and is of a substantial size,

reflective of it being a high-status building. For the purposes of this appeal, its aesthetic and historic value is from where its significance is derived.

17. There are a number of associated buildings within the curtilage, including the kitchen walled garden, former stables/coach house and garden cottage. These, together with existing mature planting and tennis court, would largely conceal views of the stables and access from Middleham itself.
18. There would however be some intervisibility between the kitchen walled garden and the proposal. This intervening area comprises areas of mown grass and surfaced access road which encircles the buildings. Beyond this, the land appears less formally managed and comprises small parcels divided mainly by post and rail fencing. Within one such parcel is a sizable shepherds hut.
19. Given the distances involved between the site and the curtilage buildings, together with intervening change in character and land levels, any visual relationship between the two would be minimal. Given these observations, I find that there would be no material harm to the heritage significance of the setting of the nearby listed building and its curtilage and buildings within it.
20. As part of the appeal submission the appellant has provided an archaeological assessment of the site. This was a desk-based assessment, undertaken by a suitably qualified person, which concluded that there is the potential for some features to be present on site, with the potential for Saxon, Medieval and Post Medieval remains to be high. A condition requiring an on-site evaluation to ensure that there would be no harm to archaeological assets would address the matter.
21. The Council's appeal statement does not make specific reference to the archaeology report. However, they have proposed an archaeological evaluation condition to address the matter. I have taken this all to mean that the Council does not have an objection to the submitted assessment and that the above approach would be acceptable.
22. Accordingly, in respect of the above, I find that the proposal would accord with Policies SD12, SD13 and SD16 of the SDLP which, amongst other things, seek to safeguard heritage assets generally, and in particular listed buildings, archaeological heritage assets as well as their settings.

Conditions

23. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and to the relevant guidance on the imposition of conditions. Both parties have had the opportunity to comment on the conditions. I have obtained the appellant's written agreement where it has been necessary for conditions to be pre-commencement conditions.
24. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition specifying the approved plans is required in the interests of certainty.
25. Given the information submitted in support of the scheme, pre-commencement conditions are necessary for archaeological assessment and tree protection reasons, which will ensure the environment is safeguarded. Also to protect the environment and given the absence of precise details, finished floor levels and construction details of the access/hardstanding need to be submitted prior to commencement.

26. Conditions to ensure the development meets the biodiversity net gain requirements are necessary. To ensure the development functions as intended, conditions governing external materials, lighting and use are also necessary.
27. Given that Middleham is a large site which benefits from an established access off the main road, and that the works would take place away from immediate neighbours a construction and environmental management plan would not be reasonable in this instance.
28. The submitted plans indicate where horse manure would be stored. Given that it would be positioned away from the boundary with neighbours I find the information is satisfactory and that a planning condition to control the matter further is unnecessary.

Conclusion

29. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, along with all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions below.

Stewart Glassar

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 carried out in accordance with drawings:

Site Location and Block Plans as Existing	2404-PA-SI-01
Site Location and Block Plans	2404-PA-SI-11 Rev G
Site Layout Plan as Proposed	2404-PA-SI-12 Rev G
Ground Floor Plan as Proposed	2404-PA-PL-11 Rev E
Roof Plan as Proposed	2404-PA-PL-12 Rev F
NE Elevation and Section B~B as Proposed	2404-PA-EL-12 Rev C
NW, SE, SW Elevations & Section A~A as Proposed	2404-PA-EL-11 Rev D
- 3) No development shall take place until:
 - (i) An archaeological field evaluation has been carried out in accordance with a specification and timetable that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; and
 - (ii) Safeguarding measures to ensure the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording identified in the archaeological field evaluation have been undertaken in accordance with a specification and timetable that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority
- 4) No development shall take place until full details for the protection of the trees to be retained has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures of protection shall be in accordance with BS5837:2012 and shall be retained until the completion of the development and no vehicles, plant or materials shall be driven or placed within the Root Protection zones.
- 5) No development shall take place until full details of the finished levels, above ordnance datum, of the proposed building, in relation to existing ground levels have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved levels.
- 6) No development shall take place until full construction details of the access and all areas of hardstanding have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall thereafter be fully implemented.
- 7) No development shall take place until a Biodiversity Gain Plan, prepared in accordance with the 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation' report dated April 2024 and carried out The Mayhew Consultancy Ltd, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- 8) The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved

Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The HMMP shall include:

- a non-technical summary;
- the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority.

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when:

- the HMMP has been implemented; and
 - the habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP have been completed.
- 9) No development above ground level shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 10) No external lighting shall be erected at the site until details of the external lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall include:
- i. A lighting layout plan with beam orientation
 - ii. A schedule of lighting equipment
 - iii. Measures proposed to reduce glare and light spillage
- 11) The stable block shall be used for the private stabling of horses incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house known as Middleham and shall not be used for livery or any commercial purpose.

*****END*****