



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 June 2025

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th July 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3359484

The Swan Inn, Lower Street, Fittleworth, West Sussex RH20 1EL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant consent, agreement or approval to details required by a condition of a planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Max Skillman against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/24/03944/DCOND sought approval of details pursuant to condition No 6 of a planning permission Ref SDNP/23/02028/FUL, granted on 28 September 2023.
 - The application was refused by notice dated 20 November 2024.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of modern extension to stables, metal fire escape and construction of single storey rear extension, internal alterations, insertion of dormer in rear roof plane and external alterations.
 - The details for which approval is sought are: *Following investigative works the extent of timber repairs or replacement shall be determined following the submission of a comprehensive assessment of the barn and stable's timber frame to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall detail the extent of decay or deterioration and required repair or replacement or cutting of timbers. The extent of works including the cutting of timbers shall be implemented as agreed unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Y9507/Y/25/3359490

The Swan Inn, Lower Street, Fittleworth, West Sussex RH20 1EL

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against the refusal of details of works required by a condition of a listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Max Skillman against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/24/03941/DCOND sought approval of details pursuant to condition No 9 of listed building consent Ref SDNP/23/02029/LIS granted on 28 September 2023.
 - The application was refused by notice dated 20 November 2024.
 - The works proposed are the demolition of modern extension to stables, metal fire escape and construction of single storey rear extension, internal alterations, insertion of dormer in rear roof plane and external alterations.
 - The details for which approval is sought are: *Following investigative works the extent of timber repairs or replacement shall be determined following the submission of a comprehensive assessment of the barn and stable's timber frame to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall detail the extent of decay or deterioration and required repair or replacement or cutting of timbers. The extent of works including the cutting of timbers shall be implemented as agreed unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*
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Decision

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3359484

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B Ref: APP/Y9507/Y/25/3359490

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The planning permission and listed building consent are for the same scheme. The conditions relevant to both Appeal A and Appeal B are identically worded. Therefore, although both appeals have been considered on their own merits, there is significant overlap in the evidence submitted and the associated reasoning. As such they have been referred to jointly unless specified otherwise.
4. It is noted that previous applications have been made to discharge the conditions, nevertheless I am required to consider these appeals on the merits of the information submitted.

Background and Main Issue

5. The planning permission and listed building consent relate to an extension and works to a Grade II public house known as 'The Swan Hotel' (reference 1026496) (the LB). Part of the approved works include repairs to the roof of the associated barn and stable buildings. The main parties agree these buildings are curtilage listed and there is nothing before me to conclude otherwise. The LB lies in the Fittleworth Conservation Area and the South Downs National Park. Accordingly, I have borne in mind the statutory duties contained in sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the purposes of a national park designation.
6. Both the conditions in question were imposed to safeguard the loss of historic fabric. They both required details to be first submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to implementation of those approved details. However, it is evident from the application form for both appeals that the applications were submitted only after the works to the roofs of the barn and stable had been completed. It is not for this appeal to determine the lawfulness of the works undertaken nor to reconsider the merits of the planning permission or listed building consent, but whether the conditions should be discharged in accordance with the details submitted.
7. As the main parties agree that the works proposed and undertaken to the barn roof are acceptable, the main issue is whether the details pertaining to the works necessary to repair the stable roof would preserve the special interest and significance of the LB, with specific regard to historic fabric.

Reasons

8. The LB is a 17th century, or earlier, timber-framed building having been resurfaced in stone. The listing description infers that there has been an inn on the site potentially from the 14th century. The stables and barn are similarly constructed and from the information provided include a high proportion of original fabric. Though clearly this has been repaired and altered over time. This group of buildings is significant as it represents a good example of how a historic public house has developed over time.

9. Therefore, the special interest of the LB, insofar as it relates to these appeals, is primarily associated to the age of the buildings and their uses. How they have developed over time and the buildings' fabric reflect this.
10. It was observed during the site visit that internally the roof structure of the stable has now been enclosed. However, the rafter ends are visible externally at the eaves between the wall and gutter. This is a feature not uncommon in a building of this nature and age and is emulated across the other buildings within the group. The rafter ends form part of the visual interest, as well as specifically show the construction of the stable's roof and its age so are important to the LBs significance. As the building is built on land which falls away to the north, the open eaves and therefore the rafter ends are visually more apparent.
11. There is no dispute that repairs were required to the stable roof, including to some of the rafter ends which had decayed. This is clearly identified in the evidence submitted to discharge the conditions in question. The dispute solely relates to 9 rafter end repairs, 3 on the east elevation and 6 on the north elevation.
12. The works undertaken have attached blocks of oak to the side of the rafters with defected ends using unspecified fixings, described as sprockets. It is noted that a sprocket traditionally would extend a rafter to alter the pitch of the roof or to create an overhang. In this instance they have been installed to sure up the support for the tiles and guttering. The appellant advises they do not replace the part of the rafters which bear down onto the wall below.
13. The Authority has stated a preference for a scarf repair to the rafter ends and the use of pegs or stainless-steel dowels.
14. In terms of the visual appearance and the retention of historic fabric there is historical merit in both forms of repair. Which is more appropriate would relate to the nature of the original building and the importance of the fabric to be conserved. Visually a scarf repair can be less intrusive, whilst a sprocket repair can ensure more historic fabric is retained.
15. On inspection of the building the repairs to the eastern elevation rafters are not visually obvious. The sprockets appear to align well with the rafter ends on either side both in terms of positioning, spacing and form. However, details have not been provided as to how the sprockets have been attached.
16. Turning to the north elevation, the sprockets are more visually apparent and intrusive. They seem overly blunt in their form and in some instances appear awkwardly fitted to the rafter they support. The relationship between these sprockets, and the repaired and retained rafters looks clumsy and draws undue attention thus emphasising the repair rather than integrating with the building.
17. The sprockets' rectilinear profile appears at odds to many of stable's rafter ends, this includes those retained in the northern elevation which appear slightly chamfered¹. The appellant has confirmed the ends of the original rafters were removed back to sound timber and without evidence of the original rafter ends it cannot be concluded whether this profile is sympathetic or appropriate. Again, no details have been submitted as to how the sprockets have been attached.

¹ As shown in photograph No 2 within the appellant's Statement of Case

18. The appellant has drawn my attention to advice from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to highlight the need to retain as much historic fabric as possible. However, without the aforementioned details it is impossible to ascertain whether the sprocket repairs are the most appropriate.
19. Accordingly, the information submitted is insufficient to conclude that the sprocket repairs to the stable roof would preserve the special interest and significance of the LB, with specific regard to historic fabric.

Conclusion

20. The submitted details are insufficient to discharge condition 6 of planning permission Ref SDNP/23/02028/FUL, and condition 9 of listed building consent Ref SDNP/23/02029/LIS. Therefore, for the reasons given, Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR