



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2025

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/24/3355646

2A Beacon Road, Ditchling, East Sussex BN6 8UL

- 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 Peter Cooke against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/24/03000/HOUS.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Renewal of previous Permission No SDNP/15/05504/HOUS - Side two storey extension for a ground floor office and shower room, and a fourth bedroom on the first floor.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the supply of small to medium sized dwellings in the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

Reasons

3. Policy SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan 2019 (SDLP) seeks to limit increases in floorspace of existing dwellings to approximately 30% unless there are exceptional circumstances. In addition, the proposal must respect the established character of the local area; and not harm the amenity of nearby residents by virtue of loss of light and/or privacy. The supporting text explains that this is to avoid the over-extension of existing dwellings and the adverse impact this could have on the character and appearance of settlements and the countryside.
4. The supporting text also explains that this is consistent with Policy SD27 of the SDLP and the objective of seeking to protect the limited supply of small and medium sized homes in the SDNP. The Council's 'Extensions and Replacement Dwellings' Technical Advice Note (TAN) clarifies that a small/medium dwelling is typically one with a Gross Internal Area (GIA) of less than 120m² and/or fewer than four bedrooms.
5. The proposal would represent an increase in floor area of over 30% and result in the dwelling becoming a four-bedroom property whose floor area would take it beyond the category of being a small or medium sized home. The appellant does not dispute the figures set out in the officer report nor that the dwelling would no longer be considered a small/medium sized home.
6. The Council indicate the dwelling in 2002 had a floor area of some 94.1m². A rear extension approved in 2007, added approximately a further 17m². That 2007 permission also included a side extension which would still be capable of being

implemented. If these extensions in combination took the resulting dwelling to over 120m² they would take it beyond a small/medium sized dwelling. In that situation the current proposal would not be seen as contributing to the loss of such housing stock, as the 2007 permission would in effect already facilitate such a loss.

7. I sought confirmation from the appellants as to the GIA of the unimplemented side extension. They were unable to confirm the figure. As such, I do not have substantive evidence to confirm that the extant permission would enlarge the dwelling beyond 120m² and so represent a viable fallback position.
8. The scheme now before me was previously approved by the Council in 2015 but was not implemented. At that time the scheme was not considered by the Council to be harmful to the appearance of the house or wider area, which is consistent with their current position in that regard. However, that decision pre-dated the current policy context, which I understand has changed from what existed in 2015. While I therefore have sympathy with the appellant as the scheme has previously been approved, the previous permission attracts limited weight in the context of the current Local Plan policies.
9. Policy SD31 does allow for exceptional circumstances to be considered. Although the appellant refers to personal circumstances for not implementing the 2015 permission, there is nothing to suggest this was an exceptional circumstance. No other exceptional circumstances have been advanced in favour of the proposal.
10. The Policy does also include the term 'approximately'. It is suggested that the dwelling would remain 'modest' in size and would represent a 'modest' increase in the overall floorspace. Nonetheless, the resulting dwelling would exceed the permitted percentage uplift by 12% and the 120m² floorspace allowance by some 13m². These are not small amounts and are not caught by the term 'approximately', which is explained in the TAN.
11. Paragraph 7.93 of the supporting text to the policy does indicate that some larger extensions may be permitted where there is, amongst other things, an enhancement in the appearance of the dwelling. The TAN explains that while this offers some flexibility, enhancements are expected to be significant. Although there is no objection to the appearance of the extension, there is no suggestion that it would represent a significant uplift to the appearance of the dwelling.
12. The proposal would therefore represent the loss of a small/medium sized house in the SDNP. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy SD31 of the SDLP which, amongst other things, seeks to limit the size of extensions to dwellings in the SDNP and thus help retain the supply of small and medium sized dwellings.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR