
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by **Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3364719

Garden Cottage, Pitsham Lane, Cocking, West Sussex GU29 9RD

- 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 Mrs Veronica Flockhart against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/24/03049/FUL.
 - The development proposed is change of use of Garden Cottage at Pitsham Gate, Pitsham Lane, Bepton, Midhurst GU29 9RD to independent dwellinghouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed change of use on:
 - the character and appearance of the area
 - the living conditions of occupiers of Pitsham Gate and Garden Cottage.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The property lies at the end of an unmade track surrounded by grazing land and wooded shaws. The annexe known as Garden Cottage is a modest single storey building standing in front of the main house, Pitsham Gate. There is a shared parking area to its front, accessed by a gate from the track. There is a small garden area at the rear of the annexe demarcated by a low picket fence, but otherwise it is surrounded by the garden of the main house. The character and appearance of the area is rural and undeveloped, with the property somewhat isolated from other houses to the west fronting Bepton Road and Pitsham Lane.
4. The annexe is already used for residential purposes and therefore the proposal to change it to an independent dwelling would have little additional impact on the character or appearance of the area. A new parking area would be formed between the cottage and the track, and part of the current parking area would be fenced off at the front of the cottage. While these changes would introduce further structures and hard surfacing, they would be modest in nature and not unusual or out of place within the domestic setting of the garden.
5. I conclude that the proposed independent use of the cottage would not harm the character or appearance of the area, and would not therefore conflict with Policies

SD4, SD5 or SD25 of the South Downs Local Plan or the purposes of the South Downs National Park, in so far as those policies and purposes seek to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and landscape qualities of the area.

Living conditions

6. The cottage lies in close proximity with the main house and activities associated with it are intimately linked with those of the main house. Although there is some demarcation of garden at the rear of the cottage, this is small and looks out over the garden area of the main house, such that activities being carried out in either garden are likely to impinge on the informal enjoyment of the other. While the two buildings are in the same planning unit that is a matter within the control of the owner. However, if the two were to be occupied separately, there would be a loss of privacy and a greater potential for conflict between the two.
7. Similarly, vehicle movements and other comings and goings would take place in close proximity to both the cottage and main house. Even with demarcation of land in front of the cottage, there would still be vehicle movements associated with the main house immediately adjacent to it, and vehicle movements associated with the cottage taking place adjacent to the garden of the main house. I consider both have the potential to cause disturbance.
8. I conclude that the intimate relationship between the two buildings is such that separate residential use would harm the living conditions of occupiers of both buildings. The proposed change of use would therefore conflict with Policy SD5 of the South Downs Local Plan, which seek good design in new development.

Other Matters

9. The appellant and her family have financial reasons for wanting to separate the use of the two buildings. However, that is a personal matter rather than a planning matter and is not material to the issues I have taken into account in reaching my decision.

Conclusion

10. The Authority is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The creation of an independent dwelling would therefore be of benefit in increasing the housing supply in an area where there is a shortfall. However, the annexe is already in residential use and its use as a separate dwelling would not increase the amount of residential accommodation available. This tempers the benefit that would accrue from a separate residential use. I consider that the harm I have identified to the living conditions of occupiers of the cottage and main house significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefit of creating a separate residential use.
11. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR