
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 December 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3363811

Gastons Farm, Shillinglee Road, Shillinglee, Northchapel, West Sussex GU8 4SX

- 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 Duncan Courtney against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/24/04778/HOUS.
 - The development proposed is replacement single storey rear extension and associated works. Installation 1 rooflight.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Y9507/Y/25/3363816

Gastons Farm, Shillinglee Road, Shillinglee, Northchapel, West Sussex GU8 4SX

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Duncan Courtney against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/24/04779/LIS.
 - The development proposed is replacement single storey rear extension and associated works. Installation 1 no rooflight and secondary glazing throughout.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the descriptions of the proposal above from the decision notices as that more accurately reflects the proposal and is also the one given on the appeal form.
3. As the proposal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
4. The appellant considers that the original scheme is acceptable but has submitted amended plans with the appeal. These altered the size of the rooflight, changes to the hanging tile and clarified that further information would be needed for the works to the fireplace. The changes are not significant and given they were provided at the outset of the appeal, parties have had opportunity to comment on them. Therefore, while I have considered the original scheme, as the appellant also suggested that these matters could be covered by conditions, where relevant I have considered the proposed amendments.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:

- whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as “Gaston’s Farmhouse” (Ref: 1223233) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and
- the effect on the landscape and scenic beauty of the South Downs National Landscape with particular regard to dark skies and tranquillity.

Reasons

Gaston’s Farmhouse

6. The listed building is a 17th century vernacular timber framed farmhouse with stone rubble ground floor and red brick dressing. The first floor is tile-hung with some variation in the appearance of the tiles. There is a prominent half hipped roof with a large central chimney stack. Windows are casement style. Extensions were added to the side and rear during the 19th and 20th century.
7. The building reflects a typical domestic style of house from the post medieval period. Internally the building retains a great deal of historic fabric, and the layout is little altered. The historic core is still legible, and subsequent phasing has been sympathetically integrated. The narrow historic core can still be appreciated as well as the later additions whilst not eroding the narrow range of the building.
8. Externally the building has a pleasing simplicity and consistency in the architectural form and materials. There are subtle differences in terms of the brickwork and openings for the additions that are indicative of its historic phasing. These have been sympathetic, blending in with the historic roof when to the rear. The additions have limited massing, subtly contrasting appearance and sloping roofs.
9. There are two surviving 19th century windows that have some historic value and show how buildings were updated as glass became more widely available. Although there is some variation in the finer detail of the more modern windows, they are reflective of the historic style of the older ones.
10. The special interest of Gastons Farm derives, so far as relevant to these appeals, from the legibility of its historic core and post-medieval domestic style and its sympathetic additions denoting shifts in domestic architectural traditions.

Extension

11. The proposed extension would require limited works to the existing fabric with the re-opening of a historic entrance and removal of the previous WC addition. The footprint would not be overly large compared to the dwelling as a whole and be contained within the rear patio area.
12. Notwithstanding this, it would extend far beyond the rear elevation of the historic core of the property and unlike the previous rear additions, would not stay within the flow of the slope of the historic roof. It would be a bulky addition and have large eaves which would extend above those of the other single storey elements and beyond the lower hanging tile at first floor level. Conditioning the eaves detail would not prevent this. Although subservient in height to the dwelling and the flat

roof reduces the height from a sloping one, unlike other rear additions, it would extend beyond the width of the historic building overlapping the side extension.

13. The side elevations would have quoins and materials reflecting the existing building and timber posts relate back to the construction of the dwelling. However, it would have an uncharacteristic flat roof and large areas of full height glazing with large vertical panes. While a clear contrast was sought, these features would be incongruous with the traditional form of the rest of the building. It has not been shown that a more traditional fenestration would result in a squat or unacceptable appearance.
14. The glazed link would create some separation between the main part of the extension and the historic part of the building and allow views through it. However, some walls would be solid, as would the roof. This, along with the presence of furniture and chimney would likely further prevent meaningful views through the extension obscuring views and the ability to appreciate the building. Views of the exposed fabric would be primarily internalised.
15. The contrasting form would draw the eye and be an alien feature. The mix of materials and features result in a design more complex than the simplistic and consistent appearance of the existing building.
16. Consequently, while it would clearly be a contemporary addition, the extension would be a distracting feature, eroding the consistency of the existing architecture of the building.

Rooflight

17. The roof is a large and important feature of the building, retaining the historic form. The rooflight would introduce a discordant feature into the existing undisturbed roofscape even if a 'conservation style' one were used. Moreover, it is unclear to what extent there would be a loss of historic fabric in the roof, including timbers even with the smaller rooflight shown on the amended plans.

Hanging Tile

18. While there are some decorative hanging tiles on the property, the majority are plain. While the existing plain tile has not been shown to be original, there is no compelling evidence that the decorative tile was formerly used on other elevations. In the absence of this, the more extensive use of decorative tiles would not reflect the historic appearance and construction of the building. The patina of the existing tiles to be removed would also be lost.
19. Nevertheless, the imposition of conditions or approval of the amended plans would remove this element of the scheme and ensure tiles on the front elevation were repaired and replaced like for like which would not be harmful. The associated removal of cement infill would represent an improvement.

Windows

20. The 2 historic windows would be retained and repaired with secondary glazing added. Further details of this could be conditioned were the appeals allowed. It is said that the replacement of more modern windows would reflect the historic designs, be timber framed with casement openings, although unlike existing windows they would be double glazed.

21. These are broad parameters, and although they may not be historic, the existing windows are of a traditional style and materials. There are no detailed plans of the proposed windows to show how they would sit within the reveal, the thickness of glass, glazing bars, frames, or other elements. As such, I cannot be sure that the design of the proposed windows would be suitable in this regard.
22. Given the importance of these details for considering the historic character of the building and importance of traditional materials and techniques, it would not be appropriate to impose a condition requiring such details to be agreed after any permission/consent being granted.

Other Alterations

23. New services would be required for the new bathroom. There are limited details of how the historic fabric of the building would be protected. In addition, in the absence of structural information, it is unclear what works would be required for the opening of the living room fireplace. As such, while in principle this would be acceptable it is unclear how or if it would be achieved and if not whether replacement features would be required and how they would appear. Consequently, I cannot be certain this would represent an improvement.
24. The removal of the rear porch and creation of an open porch would better reveal the historic rear elevation and legibility of the previous phases of development. This is also the case for the removal of the rear WC, although as above the new extension would partly obscure views of this area. The removal of cementitious or non-breathable materials, paint from timbers, modern partitions and ceilings would also be beneficial in the maintenance of the building, re-introducing traditional materials and exposing historic features.

Conclusion on the effect on the listed building

25. The new extension would be located to the rear where there would be limited, if any public views of this. Furthermore, some of the changes relate to the internal parts of the building. The Adopted Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document indicates that for rear extensions not seen from the street there is more design freedom. Nevertheless, not all designs will be acceptable. In any event, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.
26. Given the above, while there are some beneficial aspects to the scheme, this does not outweigh the harm that would be caused. I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Due to the extent of the works and lack of information in certain areas, it would lead to a moderate level of less than substantial harm. Nevertheless, this would be of considerable importance and weight

South Downs National Landscape (NL)

27. In addition to the statutory duty at section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Framework provides that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in NLs. Policy SD1 of the South Downs Local Plan (LP) also relates to NL purposes which include to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the land. Policy SD8 of

the Local Plan and Policy 3 of the Management Plan¹ similarly seek to protect and enhance dark night skies, while Policy SD7 includes reference to visual and aural impacts on tranquillity.

28. The NL has a varied landscape with large areas of undeveloped farmland and provides opportunities for recreation where its qualities can be experienced. An important factor of the NL's character is that of dark skies and tranquillity. The appeal site is within a transition zone. Policy SD8 identifies this as being generally where the sky quality changes from poor to the edge of an intrinsic dark sky zone.
29. The appeal site is an example of the farmsteads in the NL and there is a public right of way nearby. There is already outdoor lighting at the building as well as in the courtyard parking area around the property that would already illuminate these areas. Nevertheless, given there is little in the way of street lighting and some distance to other properties, dark skies around the farmstead are likely to be apparent.
30. The Light Impact Assessment indicates that to mitigate light from the extension that use of the dining area would need to be restricted and that blinds and curtains would be required.
31. Whilst there are already existing windows and openings on this elevation, they are considerably smaller than those proposed, one serves a WC and another a solid door. The extension has extensive glazing and was specifically designed with an outlook from the house onto the open and scenic views of the surrounding countryside. Although it is suggested that during evenings curtains would be closed to retain privacy, the extension is to the rear and with no nearby neighbours. As such, closing curtains for privacy purposes is unlikely and it is not reasonable to impose a condition restricting the use of the room. The proposal would increase light spill from the property and be more likely to be used at certain times of day and year than outdoor areas where there is existing lighting.
32. There would be additional light spill from the proposed rooflight. Although given this is not an area where people would stay for long periods or likely used for views, restrictions on coverings would be more appropriate.
33. The proposal is for a single room extension and therefore would not lead to any noticeable increase in activities or comings and goings from the site. Therefore, aural tranquillity in that regard would not be harmed.
34. Notwithstanding this, the extension would have a harmful effect on light spill and as a result the landscape and scenic beauty of the NL. This would be contrary to the provisions of Policies SD1, SD7 and SD8 of the LP and requirements of the Framework as set out above. Policy SD2 relates to ecosystem services and therefore weighs neither for nor against the proposal regarding this main issue.

Planning and Heritage Balance

35. There would be public benefits from greater energy saving, thermal efficiency and sustainable construction associated with the works. Still, these would each be small given the scale of the scheme. Even if improvements to the housing stock from a more modern and extended property were a public benefit, they would be minor for the same reason.

¹ South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2020–2025

36. There would be public benefits from some of the works to the building as set out above. Nonetheless, due to the extent of the works and lack of detail surrounding some of them, the weight they attract together is small.
37. The continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is also not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
38. Consequently, I find that the public benefits do not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset, the conservation of which carries great weight. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the listed building. It would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 210 of the Framework along with the design and heritage protection aims of Policy SD4, SD5, SD12 and SD13 of the LP.

Other Matters

39. The conduct of the Council during the application and appeal process is not a matter that affects my findings on the main issues. While the scheme has been altered to overcome previous concerns, I have found harm from the proposal before me.
40. The appeals are being dismissed for other reasons, and the proposal will not take place. Therefore, there is no need for me to consider the effects of the proposal on protected sites or carry out an Appropriate Assessment. Even if there were no harm or suitable mitigation could be secured, this would be to offset harm and be a neutral factor.

Conclusion

41. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeals should be decided other than in accordance with it.
42. For the reasons given above the appeals should be dismissed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR