
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 December 2025

by **S F Murphy BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI MISEP CEnv.**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/25/3364576

Carriage House, Burton Park Road, Barlavington, West Sussex GU28 0JS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Hail against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application ref SDNP/24/02175/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as demolition of existing buildings. Construction of one bedroom holiday let and storage associated with Carriage House grounds.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Both parties have drawn my attention to a previous appeal decision¹ made in 2023 for the appeal site for a scheme similar to that before me. That appeal was dismissed. Whilst the scheme before me has sought to address matters covered within that previous appeal decision, this case must be considered on its own merits.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the intrinsic character and appearance of the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies to the north of Burton Park Road within the SDNP. The buildings subject of this appeal are located at the bottom of a slope in the south eastern corner of a L shaped field adjacent to the garden of Carriage House. The buildings are constructed in wood and are in a poor state of disrepair and whilst formerly used as stables, are currently used for storage and vehicle storage. The field is bordered to the north and east by dense woodland. To the west lies a farm with Barlavington Manor Care Home and Assisted Living Retirement Village beyond. To the south, the field is bordered by a hedgerow and a gate with Carriage House, Woodend, the Stables and a storage unit alongside areas of hardstanding and residential gardens beyond the hedgerow. Access to the buildings subject of this appeal is shown from Carriage House. The buildings are located outside of a settlement boundary.

¹ APP/Y9507/W/23/3316992

5. The SDNP in this location is characterised by undulating rolling landscape with wide open views, areas of mature woodland and hedgerows with fields in agricultural use. The appeal site lies within an area identified as Dark Skies.
6. The proposed construction of the holiday let and storage as an outbuilding would introduce a residential use into an otherwise rural location and setting beyond the settlement boundary. The cumulative effect would be extending domestic activities and its associated paraphernalia resulting in encroachment into the open countryside.
7. Whilst I noted from my site visit that the existing storage barn is located in proximity, the proposed holiday let and storage sits separately from the other buildings within the appeal site separated by a hedge and gate. Policy SD25 of the South Downs Local Plan adopted July 2019 (the Local Plan) states exceptionally, development will be permitted where it complies with relevant policies in the plan, there is an essential need for a countryside location and it is an appropriate reuse of a previously developed site that conserves and enhances special qualities of the national park. The expansion of domestic activities into open countryside would harm the intrinsic rural character and appearance of the SDNP.
8. Furthermore, I note the hatched red area on drawing 2023/12/03 rev C has been tightly drawn for the proposal, whereas the red line boundary is drawn more widely around the remaining L shaped field. As such, there would be nothing to prevent the proposed holiday let use from encroaching further into the wider field and I can see no mechanism that could be imposed to prevent this.
9. Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 places a duty upon me to consider the two main purposes of National Parks when making a decision that may affect land within a National Park. These two main purposes are to (i) conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and (ii) to promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF places great weight on the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks requiring development within such areas to be limited. Policy SD1 of the Local Plan states that where there is a conflict between these purposes, greater weight is to be attached to the first of the purposes. Furthermore, Policy SD1 states permission will be refused where development fails to conserve the National Park landscape unless there are overriding benefits or the proposal substantially complies with the development plan policy.
10. I consider the materials proposed alongside the height and massing of the proposed building would not appear incongruous in the immediate or wider landscape. I also acknowledge that some additional activity is to be expected from the introduction of a holiday let in the form of comings and goings and that this would be limited and low key and would not conflict with Policy SD7 of the Local Plan. With regard to lighting and the protection of dark skies as required by Policy SD8, I note the appellant states that no external lighting is proposed and black out blinds can be used to prevent light escaping from the holiday let. I am satisfied that external lighting associated with the proposal could be managed to ensure the preservation of dark skies and compliance with Policy SD8 of the Local Plan.

11. I note both parties refer to the storage element of the proposed building. As identified on my site visit, storage currently takes place within the existing building. Consequently, the storage would not introduce a new activity within the location of the proposed building to which the continued maintenance of the amenity land in front of the appeal building could continue to occur.
12. I am mindful of the requirements of Policy SD23 of the Local Plan to deliver sustainable tourism and the tension this creates to preserve the intrinsic qualities of the SDNP. I also note paragraphs 88 and 89 of the NPPF seek to support a prosperous rural economy through the conversion of existing buildings, the use of previously developed land and may be found beyond existing settlements.
13. However, as set out in Policy SD1 of the Local Plan, where there appears to be a conflict between the National Park purposes, as is the case here, greater weight is to be attached to the first purpose. Therefore, whilst I note the proposed development would deliver tourist accommodation as also sought by the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, I do not consider this outweighs the harm I have identified above to the intrinsic rural character and appearance of the SDNP and that the proposal would not conserve and enhance the SDNP. Consequently, in this regard, it would conflict with Policies SD1, SD4 and SD25 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

14. The appellant has drawn my attention to a decision made for a proposed outbuilding to be used as holiday let accommodation for a site at Hazelgrove, Wiggonholt. I have been provided with limited information including the decision notice and plans. Nevertheless, the site's context and relationship with Hazelgrove alongside its planning history are not directly comparable with the scheme before me. As such, I have considered this appeal on its own individual circumstances.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons above and having had regard to the development plan as a whole and all other material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S F Murphy

INSPECTOR