

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Held at: 10.00am on 11 April 2024 at The Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre.

Present: Heather Baker (Chair), Alun Alesbury, Antonia Cox, Debbie Curnow-Ford, Janet Duncton, John Hyland, Gary Marsh, Stephen McAuliffe, Robert Mocatta, Andrew Shaxson and Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

Officers: Rebecca Moutrey, (Senior Solicitor), Robert Ainslie (Development Manager), Claire Tester (Planning Policy Manager), Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead (West)), Lewis Ford (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Sarah Round (Principal Planning Officer), Philippa Smyth (Principal Planning Officer), Richard Fryer (Senior Governance Officer) and Jane Roberts (Governance Officer).

OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and informed those present that South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. That Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

205. There were apologies for absence from John Cross.

ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

206. The following declarations were made:

- Alun Alesbury declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 7 as he was acquainted with the author of the counsel's opinion, and a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 9 as he was acquainted with public speaker Minette Palmer who was a previous Member of the Authority.
- Debbie Curnow-Ford declared a public service interest in items 6, 7, 8 and 9 as a Hampshire County Councillor.
- John Hyland declared a public service interest in item 8 as he was a parish councillor for Soberton Parish Council which adjoined the application site.
- Robert Mocatta declared a public service interest in item 6 as an East Hampshire District Councillor, and items 7 and 9 as a Hampshire County Councillor. He declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in items 6, 7 and 8 as he was acquainted with the public speakers.
- Andrew Shaxson declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 9, as he was acquainted with the public speaker Minette Palmer who was a previous member of the Authority.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2024

207. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 4: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

208. The Development Manager updated the committee on the following items:

- A decision had been issued for SDNP/23/01466/FUL, Twyford School, which came before the committee in March 2024.
- A decision had been issued for SDNP/22/04472/FUL, Land East of Harrier Way, which came before the committee in November 2023.

- Appeal decision APP/Y9507/C/22/3313813, Clappers Lane, Fulking. The appeal against the SDNPA's enforcement notice was dismissed although the period of compliance was extended to 12 months.

209. A Member requested that a copy of the Clappers Lane appeal decision be sent to Mid Sussex District Council for information.

ITEM 5: URGENT ITEMS

210. There were none.

ITEM 6: SDNP/23/04270/OUT – HOTEL, LAND NORTH EAST OF A3 NORTHBOUND INTERCHANGE, PETERSFIELD

211. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC23/24-29) and the update sheet.

212. The following speakers addressed the committee against the application:

- Cllr Matt Wright, representing Buriton Parish Council.
- Jonathan Jones, representing Buriton Village Design Statement Group.
- Richard Marks, on behalf of local residents.

213. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:

- John Bell, speaking as the applicant.
- Jeremy Gardiner, speaking as the agent.

214. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC23/24-29), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:

- Why had no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed for the site?
- Was a 50% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) relevant to the application?
- The proposal would have an irreversible effect on the area.
- The application would negatively impact the views of the area from Butser Hill.
- There were six objections, two of which from statutory consultees. The site seemed to be in the wrong location. There were alternative sites in the area that were more suitable.
- The application did not conserve or enhance the National Park, contrary to its purpose and the landscape harm was not outweighed by any potential benefits from the scheme.
- SD23 noted that travel to sites by car should be minimised. This application did not achieve that objective.
- The cycle rental facility could only be reached by car, which was a fundamentally unacceptable proposition.
- The information outlining the need for accommodation in the area was more than 10 years old. The press had recently reported there was an excess of rented accommodation available, especially with the rise of Airbnb. The need for this type of accommodation was not as strong as it might be.

215. Members were advised:

- There had been no EIA on the site as it had been determined that one was not required.
- BNG requirements were not a reason for refusal as they could be achieved through a condition.

216. **RESOLVED:** The Committee refused permission for the reasons set out in paragraph 10 of the report.

ITEM 7: SDNP/23/03766/FUL - LAND SOUTH OF CHURCH ROAD, STEEP

217. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC23/24-30) and the update sheet.
218. The following speaker addressed the committee against the application:
- Alison Driver, representing Steep Parish Council.
 - Lynette Clarke, local resident.
 - Charlotte Duthie, representing Steep Together.
219. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
- James Rush, speaking as the landowner.
 - Jacob Goodenough, speaking as the designer.
 - Stephen Sherlock, speaking as the architect.
220. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC23/24-30), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
- This was an interesting sloping site and the style of properties looked acceptable.
 - The design worked fairly well within the linear character of the Steep settlement. The 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that developments be beautiful places. This had not been achieved by this application.
 - A good design in a constrained site.
 - Having three houses owned in perpetuity by a charity was a novel approach and delivered, in a rural location, a different type of accommodation and the applicants were to be congratulated.
 - It was disappointing that the two landowners could not come to an agreement as then the desired open space could be easily accommodated within the site.
 - Speakers had commented that the land had allotment status and that there was a related charitable trust. Were officers satisfied that development could take place if approved?
 - Was the site within a conservation area?
 - The site being developed was smaller than the allocated site in the Local Plan. Why was that and could that cause future issues?
 - Were the trees between the application site and the village hall car park protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)?
 - What was the definition of open space and was there any further information on how it would be managed?
 - Was there confirmation that the portion of land described as open space would be dedicated as public open space?
 - What were the details of the proposed parking for the site and would there be any tandem parking?
 - Was there a regular local bus service adjacent to the site?
 - Did the 19% open space figure include the area designated as a biopark?
 - Did the application undermine SD89 if the public open space was not directly accessible from the village hall, given the lack of agreement between the applicant and the village hall landowners to provide direct access?
 - The fenestration of the buildings should be light in nature.

Agenda Item 3

- The site was approximately 16% smaller than the original size. Did the calculations on density comply with the smaller site?
- The charity was set up for local people, would the affordable homes be allocated to people with a local connection?
- Is the correct version of the NPPF the one extant at the time of validation?
- The landscape impact could be offsite as well as on site. The village hall was unlikely to allow overflow parking to use their car park, resulting in excess parking flowing out onto the street. Did the car parking provision meet SD89 and provide all necessary parking on site to avoid additional on-street parking on local roads?

221. Members were advised:

- The legalities of allotment or charitable trust status were outside the remit of the application and was not a material planning consideration for Members.
- The site was not within a conservation area and there were none within the vicinity of the application.
- The proposed site could provide what was required by the site allocation whilst complying with other constraints. The scheme was not reliant on the excluded land, nor would this application prejudice future use of that land.
- The trees on the western boundary demonstrate the independence of the site and were protected by TPO's.
- The allocation policy SD89, stated that a proportion of the site should be provided as public open space, directly accessible from the village hall and car park. The reference to informal fell within the explanatory text, which aids and informs the policy. A draft open space management plan had been submitted which would be secured through a section 106 agreement. The details of the management company would be agreed as part of the section 106 negotiations.
- The section 106 agreement would include all the details required to ensure the land was secured as public open space.
- The parking provision was a mixture of open driveway spaces and car barns which included some tandem parking.
- Officers were unaware of a regular local bus service. The Steep village community website noted there was a return bus trip daily from Steep to Petersfield.
- The 19% open space figure did not include the area designated as biopark.
- The scheme proposed provided access to be available, which satisfied policy SD89. It was beyond the applicants control how such access was delivered on land beyond their control.
- There was not a specific density formula available for the scheme, nine dwellings was within the allocation policy and it was a matter of design as to whether the scheme was acceptable.
- Condition 3 covered the final finish of the buildings.
- The three houses owned by the charity on the development would be allocated to local people.
- The correct version of the NPPF was the one extant at the time when the decision was made.
- The parking calculator indicated 20.89 spaces were required on site and the application proposed 20 spaces. Officers were satisfied the application complied with both the SDNPA Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and policy SD89.

222. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That planning permission be granted subject to:
 - i) A S106 legal agreement, the final form of which was delegated to the Director of Planning to secure:
 - 3 x 2bed Affordable Housing Units
 - Informal public open space management scheme
 - BNG enhancement scheme
 - ii) The conditions set out in paragraph 9 of the report and update sheet.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse Planning Permission, with appropriate reasons, if the legal agreement was not completed, or insufficient progress made, within six months of the 11 April 2024 Planning Committee meeting.

ITEM 8: SDNP/23/01722/FUL - UPLAND PARK, DROXFORD

223. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC23/24-31) and the update sheet and provided a verbal update.
224. The following speaker addressed the committee against the application:
 - Adam Faulkner, Droxford Parish Council.
225. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
 - David Barker, on behalf of Evolution Town Planning Ltd.
226. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC23/24-31), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
 - Whilst the principal of development had been established on the site how it was developed was the key concern. The scheme should be landscape led, the design did not suit the area and the buildings did not fit in with local built character.
 - The development did not seem to conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park and the proposed materials did not reflect the local vernacular.
 - The design and layout was an improvement on the extant permission in regard to the parking arrangements, but insufficient parking proposed.
 - NPPF now referenced beauty but concern as to whether the lodges would meet this.
 - How close to the end of their life were the pine trees?
 - Would gravel for the internal access route be suitable as there was the potential for it to migrate?
 - The reception building seemed rather large, was it multifunctional?
 - There was one allocated parking space per lodge, would that be sufficient?
 - Concern about the location of the spa building, notwithstanding the extant permission. Its roof pitch appeared steep and queried whether this would be suitable for a green roof.
 - The lodge roof tiles had been changed from slate to grey tiles. Had the angle of the roof pitches been considered?
 - With regards to SD23 and tourism, concern that the development would not contribute to the local economy because there was no safe pedestrian access into Droxford to access its shops and facilities.
 - The site was previously occupied by a hotel, did that have its own sewage system?

- The river Meon was one of the five chalk streams throughout the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and was of extreme importance. The waste treatment plant in East Meon often overflowed.
- The proposed conditions did not stipulate that surface water and foul drainage be separate. For both foul and surface water drainage, the Authority should seek a higher standard of protection in regard to water quality than the minimum legal thresholds required (eg. Environment Agency Permitting), given the chalk stream habitat within a Protected Landscape.
- There could be the potential for a pollution incident from the package treatment plant, with the overflow into the river Meon. Further mitigation to minimise this risk should be considered. Could a septic tank be installed instead, or a reed bed between the treatment plant and the river?

227. Members were advised:

- The tree plan that accompanied the application showed the pine trees to be primarily of category C. The overall landscape strategy included broad mixed native planting across the site.
- Gravel would be used on the areas of the site which were level to avoid migration, and landscaping scheme, including surfacing materials, was conditioned.
- The reception building had a first floor which would accommodate two-bedroom staff accommodation. On the ground floor there would also be laundry facilities for guests, so it was a multi-functional building.
- There was one allocated parking space per lodge, with additional parking next to the spa for when guests checked in at reception. The car parking was dispersed across the site.
- The flat roofs around the spa roof would be used for green planting, there would be no green planting on the pitched elements of the roof.
- The roof pitches of the lodges would be sufficient for the proposed materials.
- There would be a site wide landscaping scheme with a wooded character around the lodges and grassland in between them and the River Meon. Once established, the landscaping would help to integrate the development into the landscape.
- Southern Water would not be responsible for foul drainage because a private package treatment plant was proposed. The package treatment plant would be privately owned and managed through the management company.
- Drainage was based on calculations on outflows and climate change, and there were no objections on technical aspects from any of the statutory consultees. An appropriate management plan for the SuDs and foul drainage was conditioned
- The previous hotel had a septic tank. The extant scheme had a more conventional soakaway scheme and involved pumping the foul waste up to a package treatment plant and drainage field further up into the site.
- The proposal for drainage and foul sewage had regard to the consultee specialists, and subject to relevant conditions in the report Officers believed it would be sufficient to address concerns.

228. It was proposed, and seconded, that the application be deferred over the issue of foul water treatment as well as concerns around landscape impact and design and the application be brought back to committee at a later date.

229. **RESOLVED:** The Committee:

- 1) That a decision on application SDNP/23/01722/FUL be deferred in order for further consideration of the means of foul water disposal, allowing the applicant the opportunity to address the concerns of the Committee. The deferral to also allow the applicant an

opportunity to consider and address the committee concerns in relation to landscape impact and design of the lodges. The application be reported back to the Planning Committee at a later date for final determination.

230. Gary Marsh left the meeting at 1.52pm.

ITEM 9: SELBORNE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

231. The Officer reminded Members of the report (PC23/24-32).

232. The following speakers addressed the committee in support.

- Minette Palmer, Selborne Village Design Statement (VDS) Steering Group.

233. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC23/24-32) and commented as follows:

- Was an excellent report and Members should approve the adoption.
- The Queens hotel was no longer a hotel and now housed the Jubilee Tap.
- Could officers develop a proposal to include VDS' in the Authority's design code once they were no longer supplementary planning documents (SPD)s.

234. Members were advised:

- There was an application for the site of the Queens hotel which was currently with the Planning Inspectorate after their original decision to allow an appeal against a refused planning application was quashed by judicial review.

235. **RESOLVED:** The committee approved the adoption of the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

ITEM 10: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

236. The Officer reminded Members of the report (PC23/24-33).

237. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC23/24-33) and commented as follows:

- What was the status of Neighbourhood Development Plans as they got older?
- Can a Parish Priority Statement (PPS) be updated after submission?

238. Members were advised:

- There was no requirement to review neighbourhood plans, but as situations changed and time progressed they could become less relevant and their relevance was considered when new applications were submitted.
- The PPS were the Authority's own informal pilot and they could be reviewed and updated as new information became available.

239. **RESOLVED:** The committee noted the progress to date on the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) and Parish/Village Design Statements (P/VDS) across the South Downs National Park.

240. The Chair closed the meeting at 2.13pm

CHAIR

Signed: _____

