

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	11 December 2014
By	Director of Planning
Local Authority	SDNPA (Arun)
Application Number	SDNP/14/02835/FUL
Applicant	Mr and Mrs Bacon
Application	Re-development of former stables to provide single storey split level bungalow, plus garage block and extended forecourt area
Address	Wellcroft, The Street, Patching, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3XF

Recommendation: That planning permission be refused for the reasons set out in paragraph 10.1 of this report

Executive Summary

The application is for the redevelopment of an existing single storey stable building to create a two-bed split-level bungalow and associated detached four-bay garage.

The proposal is located in the open countryside outside of a settlement boundary and in a unsustainable location for new build residential development. Given the scale of the works, the proposals are considered to be tantamount to the construction of a new dwelling, not the conversion of an existing building, and as such contrary to national and local planning policy. Furthermore, the proposals are considered to be unsympathetic to the surrounding natural and built environment, and would have a detrimental impact on the setting of a grade I listed church and the setting, character and appearance of a conservation area. It is considered that the design and scale of the proposed development fails to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

The application is reported to committee due to the objection received by Patching Parish Council and the number of third-party representations received.

1. Site Description

- 1.1 Patching is approximately 1.5km north east of Angmering and 0.5km west of Clapham. It is within the Angmering and Clapham Wood Downland character area and the landscape around the village is characterised by areas of woodland interspersed with arable fields of varying sizes. The application site is adjacent to the northern boundary of the Patching conservation area, which covers the majority of the village. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies that the rural character of the village is derived from the informality of its layout, predominance of flint in buildings and boundary walling, lack of pavements, variety in building styles and ages and distinctive mature landscaping.
- 1.2 The application site consists of the southern part of the curtilage of the property 'Wellcroft', and incorporates a detached, brick built stable bloc, which takes the form of a 'horse-shoe' shape with a small enclosed yard area at its centre. The site benefits from an existing gated vehicular access off The Street and off-road parking area to the front of the stable building. The existing stable is set on a flat area of hardstanding, which would appear to have involved some excavation of the land when first constructed. To the north and west of the stable the land rises steeply, where it appears to have been previously excavated. The site is enclosed

by minimal landscaping to the north and south, with a brick wall and gated access along the eastern boundary with the highway, The Street.

- 1.3 The application site is located to the south of the applicant's property 'Wellcroft', with two further residential properties located to the east of the site, on the opposite side of The Street. The site adjoins the grounds of the grade I listed Church of St John the Divine, located to the south-west of the application site. To the south of the site is an open paddock, with further residential properties and a farm complex beyond. Open fields are located to the north-east and north-west of the site. There are public footpaths to the north and west of the village.

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 SDNP/13/03267/FUL – Conversion and extension to existing stable block to create one single dwelling, garage block and boundary walls. - Withdrawn 15/11/2013.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the re-development of the existing stable building in order to create a split-level, two-bed bungalow. The works would also include, further ground excavation to the north-west of the building to accommodate a significant extension to the existing stable building. The proposal also includes the construction of a detached four-bay garage block; and extending the existing forecourt area.
- 3.2 The proposed bungalow would effectively be split in to two main parts, the front part which would be sited predominately on the same site as the existing stable, and the rear part which would consist predominantly of an extension to the existing stable building. The front part of the bungalow would incorporate the front door and porch; hallway; two bedroom and two bathrooms. This front part would be on the same level as the existing stable and would incorporate a pitched roof that would project approximately 1.3m higher than the ridge height of the existing stable. The rear part of the bungalow would incorporate the kitchen; living room; dining room; utility and w/c, and involves the demolition of the rear part of the existing stable. Excavation works are also proposed in order to reduce the ground level to accommodate the proposed construction. Despite the proposed excavation, the rear part of the bungalow would be set higher than the front part, with a ridge that would be approximately 1.7m higher than the ridge height of the front part of the bungalow, and approximately 3m higher than the ridge height of the existing stable.
- 3.3 The proposed detached four bay garage would extend to approximately 70 sq.m, and would be 5.2m high, and would be higher than the existing stable building. Both the proposed bungalow and detached garage block would be finished in facing brick and plain clay tiles that would broadly match those used in the existing stable building. The proposed development would also involve the installation of retaining walls and further landscaping around the proposed built development.
- 3.4 The application is supported by existing and proposed plans and elevations in addition to the following:
- Design & Access Statement;
 - Phase I Bat Survey;
 - Site Photographs;
 - Baseline Landscape Assessment Checklist;
 - Newspaper Article on self build.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 **Patching Parish Council:** Objects to the proposed development on the following grounds:
- Little consideration given to the visual impact the development would have on properties opposite site, those further to the south, and the rest of the village;

- Whatever landscaping is planted will not alleviate the closed in effect the development will have on that section of Patching Street;
 - Question the need for such high gables;
 - The proposed parking provisions will significantly intrude into the villagescape and are not commensurate with the requirements of a two bed residence.
- 4.2 **HCC Ecology Officer:** No concerns regarding bats and the existing building to be lost. However, recommend that some further information is sought. It is unclear whether any trees will be impacted by the proposals. The plans show the filling of a pond. No information is provided regarding the nature of the pond and its current ecological value. No ecological information is provided beyond the existing building itself.
- 4.3 **WSCC Highways Officer:** No objection on highway safety grounds. The proposal will utilise an existing access onto The Street. There are no known issues with this access in its current format serving the existing stables. Visibility appears acceptable. As no significant intensification of use is anticipated, there would be no expectation for this proposal to give rise to any highway safety concerns.
- 4.4 **SDNP Historic Building Officer:** Object. At present the building is single storey and is dug into the slope. The only element which can really be seen from outside the site is the roof, which, with its use of tiles, sits quite comfortably in its context and read as small outbuildings. Any impact on the setting of the Conservation Area would arise in apart from the increased visibility from the lane of the upper story of the proposed structure. The impact of the proposed structure on views from the churchyard affects both the setting of the listed Church and the setting of the Conservation Area. The design of the proposed structure is poorly related to its context and compromised by using the existing stable block as a starting point. The proposal would have a negative impact on the setting of the Conservation area and that of the listed Church.
- 4.5 **SDNP Design Officer:** Object. The proposal does not relate well to the distinctive building patterns of Patching in terms of its relationship to topography/site levels and the street, together with the building types and details. The existing building is excavated into the site, and the proposal seeks to continue and extend this approach. This engineering-led approach emphasises the uncharacteristic nature of the proposals and unacceptably distorts the character landscape form and built environment quality. The arrangement of the house, the hard standing and garages bear no relationship to the locally characteristic building layout patterns. The proposed bungalow appears to have been designed without any consideration of locally characteristic building types. It represents a generic, placeless approach design which only seeks to make reference to its locality through its materials palette. The garage also appears to be out of scale.

5. Representations

- 5.1 17 third-party representations have been received supporting the proposal on the following grounds:
- Build is single storey, and should blend in well with surrounding properties
 - It is a conversion of an existing building and increases the number of dwellings in the village
 - Will ensure sustainability of local services
 - Village needs small scale sympathetic development
 - Will add to mix of housing in the village
 - Materials used are harmonious in the village setting, and
 - Will not significantly affect anyone.
- 5.2 17 third-party representations have been received objecting to the proposal, raising the following issues:
- Impact on residential amenity
 - Impact on traffic and local highway network

- Contrary to planning policy
- Will alter setting and views of the village
- Detrimental impact on setting of conservation area and grade I listed church
- The re-build is significantly larger than the existing stables
- Noise and disturbance caused during construction
- Unsustainable location, and
- Four-bay garage is excessive

6. Planning Policy Context

6.1 Applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan in this area is the Arun Local Plan 2003.

National Park Purposes

6.2 The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas;
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social well being of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 2010

6.3 Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was issued and came into effect on 27 March 2012. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection and the NPPF states at paragraph 115 that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the national parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight in National Parks.

6.4 The development plan policies listed below have been assessed for their compliance with the NPPF and are considered to be compliant with the NPPF.

The South Downs Partnership Management Plan

6.5 The South Downs Partnership Management Plan (SDPMP) was adopted on 3 December 2013. It sets out a Vision and long term Outcomes for the National Park, as well as 5 year Policies and a continually updated Delivery Framework. The SDPMP is a material consideration in planning applications and has some weight pending adoption of the SDNP Local Plan. Of particular relevance to this application is outcome 9 – ‘communities and businesses in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to meet local needs and improved access to essential services and facilities’. This is linked to policy 50 whereby housing and other development in the National Park should be closely matched to the social and economic needs of local people and should be of a high design and energy efficiency standards, to support balanced communities so people can live and work in the area.

7. Planning Policy

7.1 The following saved policies of the Arun District Local Plan 2003 are relevant to this application:

GEN3: Protection of the Countryside

GEN7: The Form of New Development

GEN12: Parking In New Development

GEN29: Nature Conservation across the District

AREA2: Conservation Areas

DEV2: Conversion of Rural Buildings for Residential Use

DEV17: Affordable Housing

- 7.2 Patching Conservation Area SPG 2000 – which provides a description of the character and appearance of the conservation area and especially notes the 13th Century St Johns Church and its spire as key features as well as the rural character of the village.

8. Planning Assessment

- 8.1 The application site is situated within the open countryside where there is a presumption against new residential dwellings, planning policies do however allow for the conversion of existing buildings to residential use. The application has been submitted on the basis of it being a conversion of an existing building. Policy DEV2 of the Arun Local Plan which deals with the conversion of existing buildings requires amongst of things that the building to be converted to be structurally sound, of permanent construction and capable of conversion without rebuilding or significant alteration or extension. No structural survey has been submitted to support this application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion. In any case as indicated by the plans the proposal does not represent a conversion of an existing building. The proposed development would involve significant demolition and extension to the existing stable building insofar that it could not reasonably be considered to constitute a conversion. The proposals are tantamount to the construction of a new bungalow that just happens to be on the site of an existing stable building. Indeed the submitted design and access statement confirms that *“the existing stables structure will be removed and new external wall will be formed.”*
- 8.2 The development therefore has to be considered in the context of a new isolated home in the countryside. In accordance with policy GEN3 of the Arun Local Plan 2003 and paragraph 55 of the NPPF, the provision of a new isolated home in the countryside should be avoided, unless there are special circumstances including meeting a demonstrable need for agricultural or forestry workers accommodation or if a development is of exceptional and innovative design. In this case, the proposed development is not considered of exceptional quality or of an innovative design; it does not meet an essential need for a rural worker; and it is not the optimum use of a heritage asset. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposals represent the re-use of a redundant building that would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting. In light of the above, it is considered that the principle of a new dwelling in this location, where the primary movement of occupiers of the property would be via the private car to reach local services and facilities, would represent unsustainable development, would be unacceptable and contrary to both national and local planning policy.
- 8.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places significant weight on requiring good design from development. Paragraph 64 of the NPPF states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Saved Policy GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan is generally in accordance with this national policy. The proposal is not considered to relate well to the distinctive building patterns of Patching in terms of its relationship to topography/site levels and the street, together with the building types and details. The proposed detached four-bay garage block is considered to be overly large and visually obtrusive within the established semi-rural street scene. Furthermore it has not been demonstrated that the raising of the ridgeline would not result in harm to the landscape and visual quality of the area.
- 8.4 Saved policies GEN7, AREA2 and national policy in the NPPF, taken together, all require that development should take account of the importance of heritage assets and not cause material harm to them. Policy AREA2 in particular, reflect the general duty, at s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area and as s66(1) of that Act, amongst other matters, to have special regard to the setting of listed buildings. The heritage assets in this instance are Patching conservation area

immediately to the south of the site and the Grade I listed Church to the south-west of the site.

- 8.5 The proposed bungalow would be sited approximately 60m to the north-east of the grade I listed church. It is considered that the proposed development, which would be at the highest point approximately 3m higher than the existing stable building, and project nearer to the listed church and would have a detrimental impact on the setting of this grade I listed building, particularly when viewed from the north, east and churchyard. Furthermore, the proposed bungalow would be sited adjacent to the northern boundary of the conservation area. As per the comments of the SDNP Design officer and Historic Building Officer, the proposal does not relate well to the distinctive building patterns of Patching in terms of its relationship to topography/site levels and the street, together with the building types and details. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would fail to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area or its setting and the setting of the listed Church.
- 8.6 With regards to the impact upon neighbouring properties, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any significant loss of amenity to any neighbouring property, in terms of loss of light or privacy.
- 8.7 It is noted that some third party concerns have been raised with regards to highway safety. However, in agreement with the comments of the WSCC Highways Officer, it is not considered that the proposed development, which utilises an existing vehicular access, would result in such a significant increase in vehicular trips to and from the site that would prejudice highway safety. A construction management plan that could be secured by way of condition is considered reasonable in light of the number of the third party comments that have raised disturbance during construction phase as an issue.
- 8.8 With regards to ecology, it is noted that the existing building does not currently support a bat roost. The comments from the HCC ecologist are noted. It is reasonably considered that further information and mitigation/enhancement could be secured by way of condition. As such, it is considered unreasonable to refuse the application on ecology grounds.
- 8.9 The site is in Findon ward and in accordance with policy DEV17 of the Arun Local Plan 2003 a financial contribution is required towards affordable housing and the applicants have accordingly agreed to enter a s106 agreement for a payment of £9,128.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposal is located in the open countryside in what is considered an unsustainable location for new build residential development. The proposals are not considered to constitute the conversion of an existing building given the extent of works proposed, and are tantamount to the construction of a new dwelling. The proposal does not comply with the criteria for new isolated dwellings in the countryside. It is considered that the design and scale of the proposed development fails to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the area. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the grade I listed church to the south-west of the site, together with the setting, character and appearance of the conservation area.

10. Recommendation and Reasons

- 10.1 It is recommended that the application be refused for the following reasons:
- I. The proposed development does not constitute the conversion of an existing building, given the scale and nature of the works, and would instead be the construction of a new dwelling. The application site is within the open countryside and special circumstances have not been demonstrated to justify a new dwelling in this unsustainable countryside location. As such, the proposed development is considered contrary to paragraph 55 of the NPPF and saved policies GEN3, GEN7 and DEV2 of the Arun District Local Plan 2003.

2. The proposed development by reason of its scale, height and design together with its relationship to site levels/topography does not relate well to the building pattern of Patching, building types and details. Furthermore the proposed detached four-bay garage block is considered to be overly large and visually obtrusive within the established semi-rural street scene. The proposed development fails to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, contrary to saved policy GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan 2003 and the NPPF.
3. The proposed development by reason of its height and design coupled with the depth and scale of the rear extension would have a detrimental and harmful impact on the setting of this grade I listed building, particularly when viewed from the north, east and churchyard. Furthermore, the scale and design of the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the setting, character or appearance of the conservation area. As such, it is considered that the proposed development is contrary to saved policy AREA2 of the Arun District Local Plan 2003 and the NPPF.
4. The proposed development makes no provision for affordable housing on site, off site or by way of a financial contribution. The scheme is therefore unacceptable and contrary to saved policy DEV17 of the Arun District Council Local Plan 2003 and the NPPF.

11. Crime and Disorder Implication

- 11.1 It is considered that the proposal does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

12. Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 This planning application has been considered in light of statute and case law and any interference with an individual's human rights is considered to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised.

13 Equalities Act 2010

- 13.1 Due regard, where relevant, has been taken to the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010.

14 Proactive Working

- 14.1 In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the NPPF. This has included accepting amendments during the application process.

Tim Slaney
Director of Planning
South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: David Cranmer

Tel: 01730 819267

email: david.cranmer@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendices I. Site Location Map

SDNPA Consultees Director of Planning & Legal Services

Background Documents Application Documents

<http://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=N6NBY0TU04A00>

National Planning Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

National Planning Practise Guidance

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

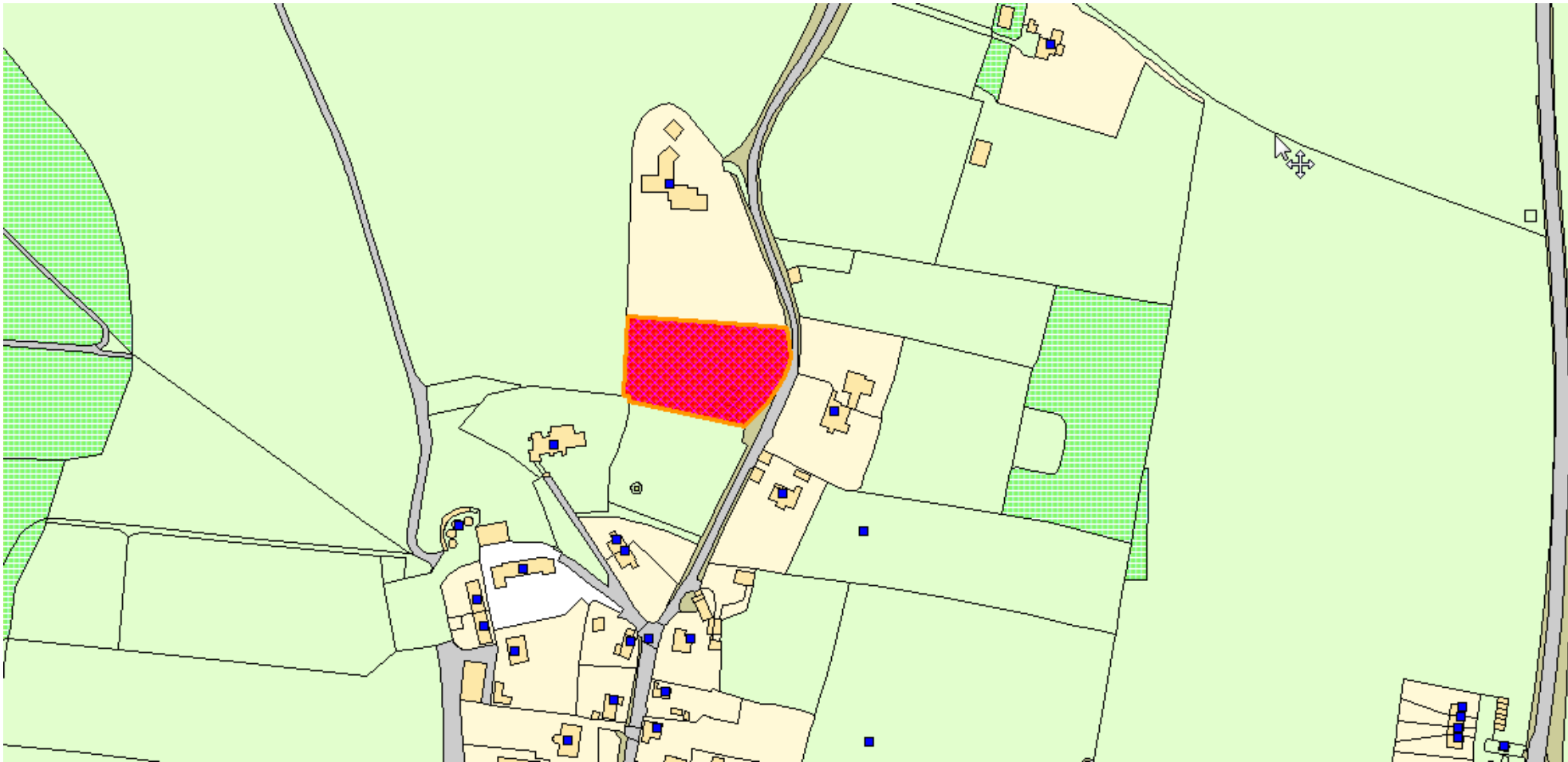
SDNP Partnership Management Plan

http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/409799/SD_ManPlan_2013_15.pdf

Arun Local Plan

<http://www.arunlocalplan.net/>

Agenda Item 13 Report PCI09/14- Appendix I Site Location Map



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Downs National Park Authority, Licence No. 100050083 (2012) (Not to scale).