

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	18/01/2016
Site:	Barrow Hill Farm Barrowhill Farm Lane, Ramsdean, Petersfield GU32 1RW
Proposal:	Demolition of agricultural barns 1, 4B, 5, 6 & 7; erection of 7 new holiday cottages; conversion of agricultural barns 2 to a reception/laundry room/cycle store and plant room, barn 3 to a holiday cottage and barn 4 & 4A to an indoor swimming pool
Planning reference:	SDNP/15/04644/FUL
Panel members sitting:	Mark Penfold (Chair) Graham Morrison Kay Brown Adam Richards Merrick Denton-Thompson David Hares Duncan Baker Brown
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes Vicki Colwell Hayley Stevenson
Committee member in attendance:	Robert Mocatter
Item presented by:	Huw Thomas Michael Knappett Graham Luff Deborah Luff
Declarations of interest:	None

The Panel's response to your scheme will be placed on the Planning Authority's website where it can be viewed by the public.

The SDNPA operate a transparent service, whereby pre-application and application details, although not actively publicised will be placed on the online planning register. This is unless the applicant gives reasons why the enquiry is commercially sensitive.

COMMENTS

	Notes
1.0 Discussion/ Questions with applicants	<p>The panel asked to see a plan that shows the scheme in the context of the whole settlement. The applicants were able to show this and told the panel that Ramsdean is 2 and half miles from Petersfield, and said the buildings within it are a mixture of different styles.</p> <p>The Panel asked the applicant how many other dwellings are within the settlement. The applicant replied that there are approximately between 30 and 40, that it is considered to be a small hamlet.</p> <p>The Panel asked what the requirements would be for the holiday lets to attain the 5* Visit England award. The applicant replied that the criteria is based on quality. This includes a good quality build, the furnishings provided, the linen, the kitchen equipment, size of rooms, facilities and the number of mod cons.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the criteria included garden space. The applicants responded that the existing units do not have a great deal of privacy, and they have found that that is an issue for visitors.</p> <p>The Panel asked how the current outdoor space will be subdivided. The applicant explained that the majority of the units would have 'pens', however most of the space is communal. The idea of this is to create versatile spaces that would work for groups and larger parties as well as couples and individuals.</p> <p>The Panel asked what the applicant felt the new environment would be like. The applicants suggested that it would mimic a farmstead allowing visitors to feel as if they are coming to a farm. This would be communicated through the style of the barn and materials used. The design is not a model farm and has been designed for people and not animals. The layout plan was informed by sun angles and the views.</p> <p>The Panel asked the applicants thoughts on retaining the relationship between the farm yard and Barrow Hill Farm House. The applicant explained that they tried to create areas between the buildings but not in a modern farm house.</p> <p>The Panel identified that the scheme should be presented in the context of a whole farm plan to explain the knock on effect of consolidating farm activities to the other yard. The South Downs National Park Authority's concern is the viability of the farm and would like it to remain as a viable farm business. That is why the scheme should be considered within the whole farm as one, as it is one landscape.</p>

	<p>The Panel noted that there is a screen bank that may have been planted at one time, and the landscape could be enhanced if forestry transplants (species that are appropriate to the South Downs) were planted in this area to help screen the agricultural building group at the side of Rose Cottage. The Panel asked if the applicants were open to this recommendation.</p> <p>The applicants said that they acknowledged the recommendation, were happy to do this and thought it was a very good idea. They also noted that while they have instructed a landscape architect, they have not submitted a landscape plan, as they hope to provide one as part of a planning condition.</p> <p>The Panel explained the importance of Landscape in the SDNPA, and how it is a primary aspect of the application. The landscape scheme should come in alongside the development scheme so the panel can consider the whole pattern. It is unfortunate when the landscape is considered as a secondary matter dealt with by condition. Landscape is a core reason for the National Park designation and should inform the layout and design of the whole scheme.</p> <p>The applicant commented that the Landscape has been considered as they have submitted a Landscape assessment.</p> <p>The Panel responded to this by further explaining that there needs to be a direct link between the assessment and the design of the scheme, and this link should be clearly demonstrated within the proposal.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the number of units had an impact on viability.</p> <p>The applicants said it did. The number of units proposed are necessary in order to provide the swimming pool, staff to help with marketing, maintenance and the daily duties of running holiday accommodation. The business cannot operate without help and it is expected that approximately 3 full time members of staff would be needed. The local community welcomes the opportunity to employ local people. The applicants informed the panel that they have provided financial information to the case officer as requested.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the scheme would still be viable if two units were omitted.</p> <p>The applicants said it would not.</p> <p>The Panel asked the applicant to explain the differences on the revised drawings?</p> <p>The amendments are to paved areas, the removal or the amount of hard standing and the boundaries for each unit. However these have not been formally submitted to the case officer yet. It was agreed to present the changes to the panel first.</p> <p>The Panel commented that the 3D drawings show very small external openings to the units.</p> <p>The architect described this as deceptive, with larger openings around the back. The units are predominantly single story but some do have a bedroom in the roof.</p> <p>The Panel asked if there a waste management plan, a place for waste disposal and bicycle storage.</p>
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	<p>The Applicant stated that bicycle and bin storage will be in the reception area in the converted barn.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the applicants have applied for Countryside Stewardship. The applicants replied that they are already members of ELS and HLS.</p> <p>The Panel asked if they would phase the development. The applicant answered that visitors investing in a holiday do not want to enter a construction site.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the swimming pool, is necessary for the success of the scheme. The applicant explained that research suggests that there is a lack of visitor accommodation for groups or establishments offering a swimming pool. The swimming pool would be more attractive to visitors looking for 5*accommodation and provide an on-site activity for guests.</p>
2.0 Panel Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel welcomes the diversification, the use of the farm yard and loss of large barns is seen as positive. 2. The presentation was complimented for its use of water colours rather than CGI. 3. The Panel made suggestions as to how the application could be improved to achieve the high design standard required by the National Park: More analysis is required especially regarding the relationship of the development to the character of the hamlet in spatial terms. Ramsdean is characterised by buildings having a direct relationships to the road and each other. The plan presented is dispersed and too regular and therefore appears out of context to the hamlet. This is especially important here because of the scale of the new development in relation to the existing hamlet of Ramsdean. 4. The Panel mentioned that the water colour drawings presented and the elevation drawings are inconsistent and do not appear to match up, and asked for accuracy and coherence between drawings and paintings. 5. The Panel highlighted the importance of landscape and stressed that the landscape needs to be primary to the whole development. A landscape plan (informed by the LVIA) should be submitted as part of the application and not left as a condition, as the landscape should inform the design of the scheme. 6. Site planning- the panel feels it needs more coherence in terms of the series of spaces and how they relate to one another. Attention needs to be given to a hierarchy of spaces (and their function / purpose) within the farmyard. Farmyard characteristics often have abutment or collision of buildings. The surfaces, scale and organisation of spaces need further work and further thought should be given to creating south facing communal and semi-private spaces with some degree of shelter from the wind. 7. Units 4 and 5 appear to subdivide what could be a courtyard that would work as the communal aspect of the scheme, for groups of people to congregate. For example, Units 1 and 2 seem to be too far North West and are coming in front of the Gable end of the farm house next to it, intruding into the current farmyard space

	<p>that characterises the focal point of the farmstead. If it is moved back towards the road this focal space is retained.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Similarly, the panel questioned the orientation of some of the units, between units 4 and 3 (the long barn) there is a narrow gap. The wall of 3 would have the South sun against it and therefore may benefit from having an opening. 9. The entrance to the reception barn may work better if it came round to the courtyard side and related to the courtyard. 10. The Panel explained that the brief that has been set is a clear one. That they respect the need to produce views, sunlight, privacy and yards. But what has been produced has a hint of suburbia. In order to create the farm yard environment there needs to be a stronger hierarchy of buildings around a farm yard. In the current proposal there is a repetition of building forms and on balance, there are too many of the same building forms for what you would expect to see in such a group, consequently is not a typology that is easily recognised as farm-like. A farm usually has a farm house, a barn and outbuildings which create a natural hierarchy is part of the conservation of place. The proposed scheme is evened out, buildings are too similar and are all lined up at 90 degree angles. Farm buildings often collide and juxtapose, and have curious informal relationships. The plan presented is completely neat and linear which undermines the sense of character of the farm. 11. The panel felt improvements could be made to the arrangement of buildings, the contextual analysis and the language and how these respond to one another. 12. The panel reiterated they have no issue with the principle of development here, is to be encouraged and they support an application for diversification, but the layout (where the buildings are placed and spaces created) need further work to be exemplary. Groups of visitors will be coming to experience the South Downs National Park, not just a holiday cottage. 13. The application needs a whole farm plan showing how the proposal sits within the whole farm, and how the existing use on the site will be accommodated within the farm.
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