

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	18/05/2016
Site:	Parsonage Barn
Proposal:	Detached dwelling
Planning reference:	SDNP/15/05469/FUL
Panel members sitting:	Mark Penfold (Chair) Graham Morrison Paul Fender Paul Murrain Merrick Denton-Thompson John Starling Lap Chan
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes Nicky Powis (EHDC) Paul Slade
Planning Committee in attendance:	Robert Mocatta Heather Baker Neville Harrison
Item presented by:	Robert Hughes Doug King Lionel Fanshaw Wendy Perring Applicants
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 pointed out that more contextual analysis has been done and it shows in the presentation. It is now clear why this placement has been chosen. However, they questioned whether a developer could put structures near settlements but outside boundaries, before asking the applicant whether they were inspired by the way nearby barns lie in the landscape. The applicant said that they were inspired by nearby barns, having partially based the design of the roof on the way those barns are roofed, as well as designing the location of the building around typical barn clusters in the area.</p> <p>The Panel asked if the applicant can talk more about the vernacular typology, excluding the roof. In particular, they wanted to know more about the rectangular “Formal Pond” and questioned the strong horizontal line in the plans; all the precedents have extremely direct transitions from wall to roof, but with the strong horizontal line, a gap has been created. The applicant explained that the horizontal line was necessary based on the materials available for use. They had a particular interest in using flint in construction, as a traditional material, and wanted to explore how they could use flint in pre-fabricated panels, both for this venture specifically but also as a proof of concept for future builds using flint panels. They said that often the flint was used in concert with brick, the brick intended to be sacrificed as the part of the wall that gets most weathered. In their case, however, they’ll be using concrete. As regards the strong horizontal line, the applicant said that the Panels need a point where they could stop and the timber roof could rest on the walls, which necessitated that clear line.</p> <p>The Panel asked, bearing in mind that this is a designated area and that Paragraph 55 dictates that countryside construction must be exceptional, what is the motivation for building this dwelling? The applicant began by addressing the point about Paragraph 55, saying that it applied across the whole country and not specifically to protected landscapes.</p> <p>The applicant then addressed the motivation for constructing this dwelling; They explained how their brief was to demonstrate the construction of exceptional lifetime family homes. This was in response to an aging population, and they hoped to demonstrate how it’s possible to create plans for housing of exceptional quality.</p> <p>The Panel further asked whether the bar should be higher, given that this is a protected landscape. The applicant said that there was no laid out planning implications</p>

	<p>for doing so, but that they were already trying to pursue a higher quality of build themselves, of their own initiative.</p> <p>The Panel asked how many Photovoltaic cells will be used and how much can be done without them.</p> <p>The applicant said that they had space on the garage roof area for 51 panels, providing an expected total of 16.3kw of energy, which is 3.3kw more than the predicted need. This extra 3.3kw of energy would gradually offset the carbon emissions from construction, ultimately providing a truly zero carbon property. They also established that the panels were positioned so as not to be visually intrusive – They had to sacrifice some efficiency to achieve this, but the location that they placed the panels would not impact substantially either the occupants or passers-by.</p> <p>The Panel asked if there would be any interaction between the house and the courtyard; as the plans stand, there does not appear to be any. This is unusual, as it would seem to anyone passing by that there's no evidence of the house being lived in or any activity taking place. The Panel felt that there should be more interaction between the house and the courtyard.</p> <p>The applicant said that there would be interaction between the courtyard and the office, while the main house building itself would feature high windows in the Kitchen that overlooked the courtyard, allowing interaction between the commonly-used kitchen and the courtyard. There would also be bed and breakfast activity which will use the courtyard.</p>
2.0 Panel Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel carefully considered the criteria that justifies a successful Paragraph 55 application. It commented that as one of the key attributes of the proposal was the reference to the bringing together or grouping of the hamlet, the site might not necessarily be deemed as being placed in open countryside. Notwithstanding this discussion, however, the panel was persuaded that the particular site planning did positively draw the hamlet together in a manner that made a contribution to the group as a whole. The panel emphasized that the proposal did not set a generic precedent for other sites in the National Park. It recognised that this was a well-considered proposal that responded to a very particular context. 2. The Panel was impressed by the sensitive compositional response to the broader landscape. It acknowledged the successful relationship of the careful asymmetric shaping of the roof to its topographic backdrop. It was convinced that the assembly of the diminutively scaled triangular panels of the roof construction will provide the right components to turn the compelling initial sketch into an appropriate and beautiful reality. Provided that the chestnut shingled roof covering performs durably at the relatively low angles that are proposed, the Panel felt that the roof form and its texture could positively enhance its setting.

	<p>3. Though the Panel welcomed that there was much to admire in the planning and composition of the dwelling at this pre-application stage, it considered that further development of some aspects of the design would be necessary prior to a formal application. It applauded the direction and detail of the thinking in relation to construction and sustainability but it was not completely convinced that these important disciplines were yet working together to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. The Panel felt that, to make this proposal truly exceptional, further work was required to ensure that the making of the building became a compelling and contributory part of an orchestrated whole.</p> <p>4. More specifically, the Panel was looking to be persuaded how the explicit manner of the dwelling's construction and detail might be less dominant in itself and contribute more to the underlying compositional idea. It referred in particular to the simplicity of a single surface forming the wall of a typical barn that begins at the ground and ends in the roof. It questioned the distinct horizontal construction line of the proposal as it seemed to disturb and interrupt the relationship between roof and ground. It also observed that the necessary but perhaps weighty beam seemed to counter the thin edge of the roof. It also questioned if the sustainability agenda might be taken a little too far if the plan could not accommodate windows to allow a social engagement between the interior of the dwelling and the lane.</p> <p>5. The Panel was interested to know how the landscape might develop. It was convinced by the overall strategy and the idea allowing grazing sheep to come close in to the house, but it had some concerns about whether the shaping of the landscape had caught up with the architectural development of the plan. For example, it wondered if the sinuous lines of the landscaping were a little too self-conscious and seemed more at ease with the architect's first more curvilinear sketches than their later more angular development. It commented that the local landscape is more identifiably defined by agricultural usage and it speculated that a more utilitarian geometry might seem more convincing. The Panel was also concerned about the rectangular geometry of the pool. Relative to the complex geometry of the rest of the composition, it seemed over formal and even arbitrary.</p> <p>6. The Panel was concerned that the landscape plan referred only to the setting of the new dwelling. Given the declared intention of bringing the grouping of the hamlet together, it wondered how the landscape might contribute to this aim. The drawings show a quite legitimate landscape around a house but the Panel would be interested to see these thoughts develop in relation to the setting within the hamlet as a whole. Part of the idea of the composition of the house fitting the context depended on the ambiguity of it perhaps having always been there. The panel wondered if the same might apply</p>
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	<p>to the landscape.</p> <p>7. The Panel considered the planting proposal to be laudable, but it was concerned that the forms and shape of it may need to take a more robust form in response to the working character of the hamlet. In particular, it commented that the suggested Hazel coppices might be better integrated, as the historic use of this species would probably have been planted and managed in a more practical fashion. The Panel offered the view that Hazel would not normally have been associated with a domestic property or, indeed, planted in such an organic fashion.</p> <p>8. Overall, the Panel felt that the proposal had passed the point of justification in relation to Paragraph 55. The architectural intent, its response to the setting and the construction and sustainability proposals together had the promise of an exemplary scheme designed for a very particular context. The Panel congratulated the team of the intellectual input, the sensitivity of approach and the compositional skill. The Panel felt, however, that further development of the detail and the landscape was needed before it could completely endorse the proposal to a planning committee. The Panel believed this was an exceptional proposal worthy of an approval within the definition of paragraph 55 provided that the detail and the landscape was developed with conviction or, indeed, a more complete justification of the proposals as they stand was made.</p>
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