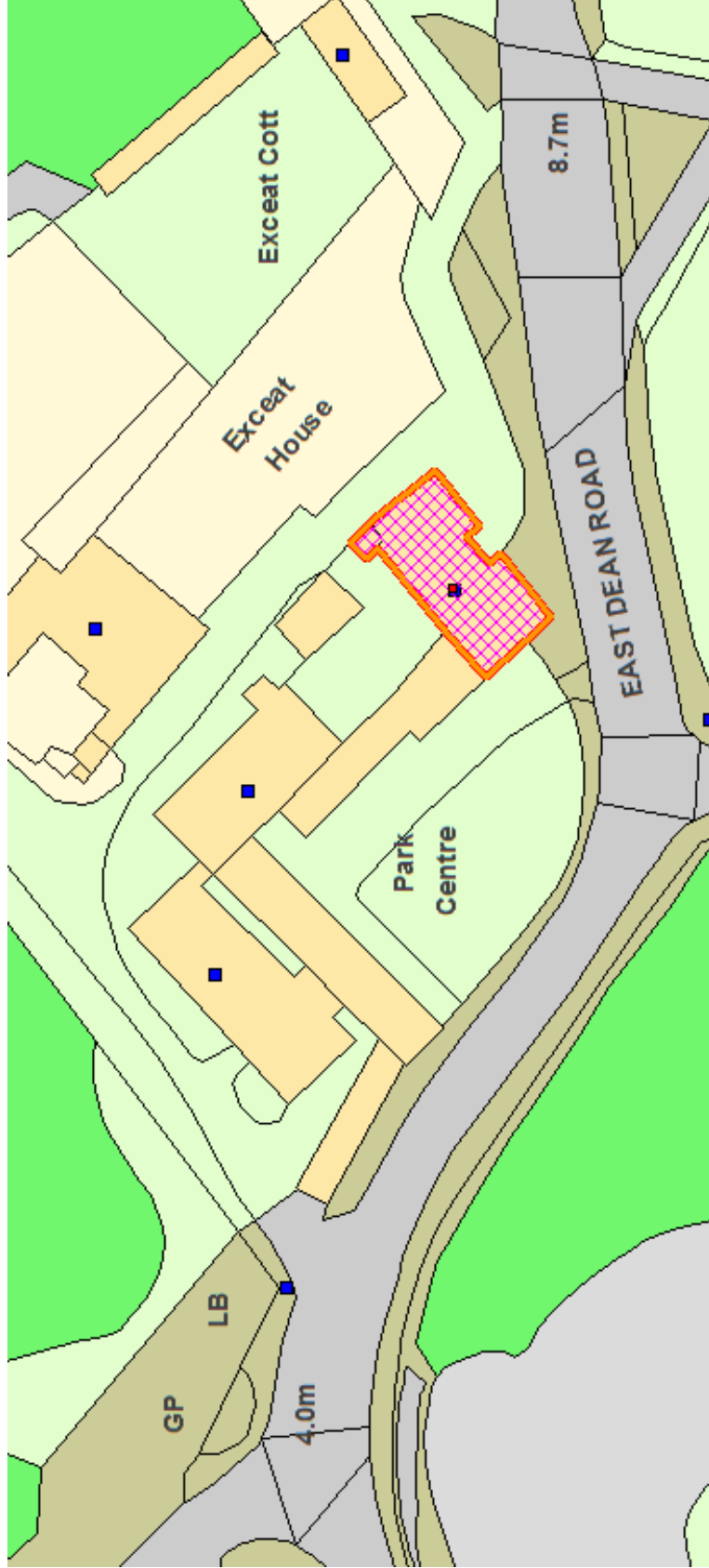


Report to	Planning Committee
Date	9 December 2021
By	Director of Planning
Local Authority	Wealden District Council
Application Number	SDNP/21/05703/LIS
Applicant	South Downs National Park Authority
Application	Proposal for one visitor directional sign at Seven Sisters Country Park, to be mounted to Grade II Listed visitor centre building
Address	Exceat Barn, East Dean Road, Exceat, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 4AD

Recommendation:

- 1) **That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to grant listed building consent subject to**
 - i) **The conditions set out at paragraph 10.1 of the report;**
 - ii) **No further material considerations being raised prior to the close of the statutory publicity period on 10 December 2021.**
 - 2) **In the case that further material considerations are raised prior to the close of the statutory publicity period on 10 December 2021, that the application be considered by Planning Committee or referred to the Secretary of State.**
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Site Location Map



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Executive Summary

- The application proposes the erection of a directional sign, to be affixed to the south-western elevation of the Seven Sisters visitor centre, which is a listed building;
- The application constitutes minor development and the main issues in consideration of the application are the impact on the heritage asset;
- No concerns have been raised by the Parish Council or third parties and the proposals are considered to be acceptable in terms of impact on heritage assets;
- The scheme is brought before Members due the application being made by the SDNPA;
- A concurrent application for advertisement consent SDNP/21/05072/ADV for a total of 10 signs, including the sign that is subject of this application, is before Members on the same committee agenda.

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The Seven Sisters Country Park visitor centre is based at Exceat, a traditional farmstead building cluster located on the east side of the valley of Cuckmere River located approximately 0.5km west of the village of Westdean.
- 1.2 The farmhouse and associated barns, one of which is the subject of this application, are Grade II listed buildings. There is also a Grade II listed K6 telephone kiosk located on the southern side of the A286 at the entrance to the Southern Sisters car park. The buildings were recently granted permission for various works as part of Phase I of the SDNPA's refurbishment works.
- 1.3 The Historic England listing describes the visitor centre as "two barns at right angles to each other with a connecting portion between C18. Faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins. Three buttresses. Hipped tiled roof with pentice on south side of west barn. Recessed waggon entrance in centre of south-east front." The Historic Environment Record notes that the building is a "relatively well-preserved example of a threshing barn and is considered to be of importance in a national context as examples of the local vernacular style of farm building architecture."

2. Relevant Planning History

- SDNP/20/02124/FUL Seven Sisters Country Park Phase I Proposals: Exceat - Additional toilet facilities, and improvement to existing facilities - Improvements to pedestrian and vehicular access - minor internal alterations within Visitor Centre building (Grade II Listed) and Dairy Barn to provide additional office accommodation; Improvements to the public realm to enhance the farmstead character of Exceat; Foxhole Camping Barn - Extension of facilities block; 1-3 Foxhole Cottages - erection of extensions and subdivision of Cottages to create 4 residential units (consisting of 1 unit of warden accommodation and 3 holiday lets). Approved 16.10.2020
- SDNP/20/02244/LIS Internal alterations to existing toilet block, workshop, ranger office, dairy barn and visitor centre to facilitate increased accessibility to visitor centre, additional toilets, confectionery outlet and office space. Replacement of existing glazed door in Visitor Centre and installation of doors in existing toilet block. Approved 16.10.2020
- SDNP/21/03062/FUL & SDNP/21/03063/LIS Insertion of wood-burning stove and metal flue to the Visitors Centre. Approved 31.08.2021
- A concurrent application for advertisement consent is being considered by the committee (item 10 on the agenda) under application SDNP/21/05072/ADV.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Listed building consent is sought for the erection of an aluminium sign measuring 0.67m wide x 0.4m high, which would be affixed above the existing buttresses on the south-western elevation of the Seven Sisters visitor centre, which is a Grade II listed building. The sign

would be powder-coated in a Corten effect finish with white vinyl lettering, and mounted to a powder-coated frame screwed into the mortar.

- 3.2 The sign forms part of a suite of new arrival signage at the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre in order to create a sense of arrival, improve waymarking and visitor orientation, and visually reflect the SDNP Shared Identity and existing boundary signage.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 **Cuckmere Parish Council:** No objection.
- 4.2 **Historic Buildings:** No objection, subject to conditions.
- 4.3 **Historic England:** No comments to make.

5. Representations

- 5.1 None received at the time of publishing the report. Members will be updated at the committee meeting.
- 5.2 The statutory publicity period ends on 10 December 2021. The recommendation is therefore to delegate the grant of listed building consent to the Director of Planning, subject to there being no further material considerations raised prior to the close of the statutory publicity period. In the case that further material considerations are raised, it is recommended that the application be brought back before Members for determination at the Planning Committee meeting of 20 January 2022.

6. Planning Policy Context

- 6.1 The relevant statutory development plan is the South Downs Local Plan (2014-33). The relevant policies are set out in section 7 below.

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 upon the Local Planning Authority to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 2010

- 6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is considered holistically although the following sections are of particular relevance to the applications:
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 6.4 Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021). The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in national parks and that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.

7. Planning Policy

- 7.1 The following policies of the South Downs Local Plan are of particular relevance:
- SD4 – Landscape Character
 - SD5 – Design
 - SD12 – Historic Environment

- SD13 – Listed Buildings

Statutory Requirements

- 7.2 Section 16 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

8. Planning Assessment

- 8.1 The key development plan policies are SD5 and SD13, which require development to utilise architectural design which is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of materials and vernacular detailing; and preserve and enhance the significance of the listed building and its setting by demonstrating that loss of historic fabric and detail of significance is avoided.
- 8.2 In this case, the proposed sign will be located on the southern corner of the listed barn, above the corner buttress. The sign is minimal in size and design, providing simple directional information to the visitor centre entrance. The sign will be affixed by means of a lightweight frame screwed into the mortar, preserving the integrity of the historic flints. The corten-effect finish will have a rusted appearance that reflects the site's historic agricultural vernacular, and the character of the signage throughout the remainder of the site.
- 8.3 The Historic Buildings officer has advised that the proposed sign would preserve and enhance the significance of the listed building and its setting, and would avoid the loss of any historic fabric or detail of significance. As part of a suite of proposed signs for the Seven Sisters County Park site, the sign will also enhance the visitor experience including access to the Grade II listed building.
- 8.4 In summary, the proposal is considered to preserve the special historic and architectural interest of the Listed Building, and accord with SD5 and SD13.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Given the above it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of section 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act (1990), and is in accordance with the development plan. It is therefore recommended that listed building consent be granted.

10. Reason for Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that listed building consent be granted subject to the following conditions:
1. The works hereby consented shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.
Reason: To comply with the provision of Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
 3. Upon completion of any element of the works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted, any damage caused to the fabric of the building shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To safeguard the historic fabric and the architectural character and appearance of the listed building.

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. Equality Act 2010

- 13.1 Due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010.

14. Proactive Working

- 14.1 In reaching this decision the South Downs National Park Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the NPPF. This has included the provision of pre-application advice and seeking amendments during the determination of the applications to ensure that the development brought forward conserves and enhances the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.

TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

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Background Documents [All planning application plans, supporting documents, consultation and third party responses](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework \(2021\)](#)

[South Downs Local Plan \(2014-33\)](#)