

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting: 22.10.21

Site: 207 Lewes High Street, Lewes
SDNP/21/03471/PRE

Panel members (DRP): Paul Fender (Chair)
Maria Hawton-Mead
James Fox

Due to only 3 DRP Panel Members this meeting was not quorate. Due to exceptional circumstances (need to restrict numbers due to Covid-19 and room capacity) and the loss of member within 24 hours of meeting, it was decided to continue with the DRP session.

SDNPA officers in attendance: Rafa Grosso-Macpherson (Design Officer)
Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer)

Lewes DC officer in attendance: Chris Wright (Specialist Adviser (Planning))

Applicant and Project Team: Jacob Fitch (Applicant)
Duncan Baker-Brown (Baker Brown Studio)
Tom Cuthbert (Baker Brown Studio)
Eimear Murphy (Murphy Associates)

Observers: Tania Hunt (Support Services Officer)
Jessica Riches (Planning Officer)

Declarations of interest: None

The South Downs National Park Design Review Panel is an independent assessment of development proposals by a panel of multidisciplinary professionals and experts, who aim to inform and improve design quality in new development. It is not intended to replace advice from the planning authority or statutory consultees and advisory bodies, or be a substitute for local authority design and landscape skills or community engagement

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

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.

Summary

On behalf of the South Downs National Park, I would like to thank you for bringing your proposal to the Design Review Panel. We are incredibly grateful to review a proposal so early in the process and look forward to participating in further DRP sessions in the future.

We would like to thank you and the applicant team for their presentation and the supporting information you provided to us; it created numerous points for discussion and generated some interesting ideas during the session.

The panel considered the proposal to be an improvement on the previous design (2015 application - approved at appeal and the 2019 refused scheme) and felt that the addition of a visible first floor was acceptable as a principle of development on site. However they did put forward some thoughts for consideration. It was felt that a more simplified form should be considered. The dual pitch form in its current configuration was considered to unnecessarily increase bulk and scale onto the car park. The simplified form would assist in addressing this matter. However, it was suggested that other forms could be explored to simplify the massing and reduce impact on the car park. This included a sliding back of one of the gables facing the car park as an option to explore. Other suggestions were put forward on the basis that a simplified form could improve the energy efficiency of the dwelling enabling the Passive House standard to be achieved. The current design was felt to be too fragmented, with too much surface area. It was also felt that the use of the arrangement of the outside space needs to consider the trees, tree roots and geology to allow for the position of a heat pump, refuse and bike storage. An Arboriculture Study is recommended to aid this.

Sustainability

- Apply 'fabric first' principle.
- Site is very tight. Consider where you could position a ground source heat pump or air source heat pump, bike store and waste store.
- Model to passive house standard using the PHPP software.
- Wood burner – is this a smoke free zone? It was suggested to remove it.
- Consider a more energy efficient design.
- Current design too imposing and fragmented – needs to be simplified.
- Overhang has a large surface area – Consider reducing the external surface area to improve the form factor.
- Consider showing the position of any proposed PV panels on the plans and elevations

Design

- The double fronted gable unnecessarily increases the scale onto the car park.
- Consider the scenery of backdrop with pitch roofs that jet out and between each is a space. Consider the site as part of the language. Take out double pitch, stagger it, or use a flat roof. The building can be something special within the space and does not need to echo the pitched forms of the surrounding fabric.
- Consider the historic ring of development surrounding the site. If you have something in the middle how do you make best? Consider modest house/ outbuilding style/ take out double pitch.
- Consider weathering of materials and how materials and gutters will cope with extreme weather in the future.
- The terrace and retaining wall to the rear could impact trees and their roots.
- Consider blinds/shutters/louvres for first floor/ kitchen and living space to reduce the effect on the dark sky and provide solar shading.