

**APPLICATION NO: WD/D/16/002262**

Construction of five two-storey dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

LAND ADJACENT 72 DORCHESTER ROAD, STRATTON, DORCHESTER

Foreshore Southern Developments Ltd

Case Officer: Rob McDonald

---

---

**1. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Approve with conditions.

**2. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site comprises a plot of land (some 0.13ha in area) on the north side of Dorchester Road and towards the western end of the village of Stratton. At the time of the visit the site had been cleared, with the removal of Japanese knotweed and some ground works appeared to have commenced. It is understood this is associated with the lawful commencement of an extant permission for two dwellings on site (Ref: 1/E/2002/2112). A large pile of earth had been formed in the NE corner of the site and the entire site was enclosed by metal security fencing. The site is screened by mature trees from the south round to the NW of the site. The site can be accessed from the main highway via an existing tarmacked road which skirts around 72 Dorchester Road and leads to the block of garages which serve numbers 62 – 72. There is a very gradual incline from the south up towards the north. The main A37 road is immediately adjacent to the north of the site. The site is within the Dorset AONB, like much of the district.

**3. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

**Adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan**

As far as this application is concerned the following policies are considered to be relevant:

- INT1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SUS1 – The level of economic and housing growth
- SUS2 – Distribution of development
- COM7 - Creating a safe and efficient transport network
- COM9 - Parking standards in new development
- COM10 - Provision of utilities service infrastructure
- ENV1 – Landscape, seascape and sites of geological interest
- ENV2 – Wildlife and habitats
- ENV4 – Heritage assets
- ENV10 - The landscape and townscape setting
- ENV11 – The pattern of streets and spaces
- ENV12 – The design and positioning of buildings

- ENV13 – Achieving high levels of environmental performance
- ENV15 – Efficient and appropriate use of land
- ENV16 – Amenity
- HOUS3 – Open housing mix

WDDC Design & Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines (2009)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

Part 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Part 7: Requiring Good Design

Para 56 - The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Para 57 - It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Part 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Part 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Decision taking:

Para 186 - Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The relationship between decision-taking and plan-making should be seamless, translating plans into high quality development on the ground.

Para 187 - Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area

**4. STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

**Parish/Town Council** – After some initial confusion from the clerk of Stratton Parish Council, the chairman has since confirmed that the Parish Council do not support the application on the basis of:

“Distance several of the houses were from the A37 Main road and resultant noise levels, level of density on the site, problems with visibility and safety for vehicles leaving the site, that the application did not include any recognised 'social housing', and a comment about the application mentioning garages, but that no garages appeared to be on the plans, only parking spaces.”

*Officer comment: The relevant planning considerations raised are appraised in the main body of the report. Assurances have been made to Members, who have confirmed that the application need not be determined by the planning committee*

*and can be determined under delegated authority.*

**Environmental Health** – I have no comments to make regarding land contaminations however noise from the adjacent A road may be detrimental to the use and enjoyment of the property I would therefore recommend a noise report be submitted with any mitigation measures be conditioned on any decision notice.

**DCC Highways** – No objection subject to conditions.

## **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

Two letters of representation have been received, relating to the following relevant concerns:

- Landscaping and screening;
- Highway safety and parking;
- Density of development;
- Design

## **6. PLANNING ISSUES**

The main planning issues relevant to this application are:

- Principle of the development;
- Design and impact within the character of the area and wider landscape;
- Highway safety and parking;
- Impact on amenity.

## **7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

### *Application details*

The application seeks planning permission to construct 5 two-storey open market dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. The dwellings would comprise a terrace row of three on the southern part of the site and pair of semi-detached houses in the north eastern part, arranged to form a courtyard. The positioning of buildings would closely resemble that approved under the extant consent. Each of the dwellings would have a private rear garden and landscaped front gardens with off road car parking. The existing landscaping and trees on the northern and western boundaries would be retained. The site would be accessed from the main highway via an existing tarmacked road which skirts around 72 Dorchester Road.

### *Principle of development*

It is acknowledged that, at present, the Council is unable to demonstrate evidence of a five year housing land supply and so, in accordance with paragraph 49 of the NPPF, Local Plan policies SUS1 and SUS2 are out-of-date and so only attract greatly reduced weight.

In line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 14 of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

The NPPF describes sustainable development as the golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. It sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 6 states that the policies in paragraphs 18 - 219, taken as a whole, constitutes the government's view as to what sustainable development means for the planning system.

Policy INT1 of the Local Plan reflects this national stance, indicating that where relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the following matters will be taken into account:

- the extent to which the proposal positively contributes to the strategic objectives of the local plan;
- whether specific policies in that National Planning Policy Framework indicate that development should be restricted; and
- whether the adverse impacts of granting permission could significantly outweigh the benefits.

One of the strategic objectives in the Local Plan is identified as achieving a sustainable pattern of development. This can be met, in part, through development opportunities in the larger villages where these take place at an appropriate scale to the size of the village (unless identified as a strategic allocation). In this regard, Stratton is identified in the Local Plan as a village that, although does not have a defined development boundary (DDB), is an established settlement with a population of 200+ and is therefore capable of supporting some growth for local needs.

The judgement as to whether the proposal would be a sustainable form of development are summarised below:

In terms of performing an economic role, the proposed development would result in the creation of construction jobs during the build period. The additional population would help generate spending in the local community, provision of infrastructure and services, as well as supporting those in other nearby villages and Dorchester. The proposal, thus, satisfies the economic dimension of sustainable development.

With regard to the social role, the NPPF seeks to promote a "strong, vibrant and healthy community by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being." The provision of 5 new dwellings (a net gain of 3 from the extant permission) will make a useful and positive contribution to the district's housing shortage. The development would effectively infill a vacant and suitable plot within the village.

As mentioned, Stratton is a village which does not have a DDB but is listed in the Local Plan as an "established settlement" with a population of 200+. Such settlements tend to

have some local facilities and are less likely to place an additional burden on services such as school bus / taxi and healthcare out-reach services.

Stratton is about 1.2 miles west of Charminster (which has a DDB) and some 3 miles outside of Dorchester and directly connected to both via the A37 and several footpaths/bridleways. There is also a bus service running into both Charminster and Dorchester. Stratton itself has a pub, church and village hall so does have some, albeit limited, local facilities. Stratton is therefore not considered to be an isolated location where new homes should be avoided, unless in special circumstances.

Although assessed and approved against an older development plan and the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategies, some weight should also be afforded to the fact that the site has already been deemed appropriate for residential development and an extant permission for 2 dwellings on the site, approved in 2003 (Ref: 1/E/2002/2112) persists.

With regard to affordable housing, the development for 5 dwellings on the site falls below the threshold for triggering affordable housing contributions (which is required for more than 5 units in designated rural areas).

It is considered that the location of the site is suitable and the proposal satisfies the social dimension of sustainable development.

Although within the Dorset AONB (like most of the District), the proposed development would be read in context with the existing built form of Stratton and would also be relatively well screened upon approach from the west to not have an adverse effect on the scenic beauty of the landscape. The site is not within a Conservation Area and does not affect the setting of any other heritage assets. A small corner of the site has been identified as having some local archaeological significance (field boundaries), although the most sensitive area shown on the plan below has already been built upon with the housing development on the south side of Dorchester Road. It is thus considered that a condition could be imposed to ensure any archaeological remains, if discovered, are recorded.

In light of this, the proposed development is thus considered to meet the environmental role of sustainable development.

It clear that there would be benefits to allowing the development but, as noted earlier in the report, paragraph 14 of the NPPF indicates that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

An assessment of whether there are any adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits is covered in the proceeding parts of the report.

#### *Design and impact within the character of the area and wider landscape*

The site is effectively a 'gateway' into the village from the west and therefore the

scheme should achieve an appealing 'first impression' arriving into the village from this direction. Following revisions the design has been improved to show more differentiation between the dwellings and higher quality scheme with improved detailing, which would be comparable with the quality of the larger development to the south (The Rise). The extant scheme for a pair of dwellings on the site had approved the use of flint and brick and so the current proposal would now be consistent with this. The new dwellings would also be composed of slate roofs, UPVC windows, brick chimneys and timber composite doors, which are not objected to.

With regard to density of development, the site would contain 5 dwellings, arranged in a terrace and pair of semis. The plot is large enough to accommodate this number without appearing to overdevelop the site or result in unnecessary cramping. Furthermore, the density of development within the plot would appear to be consistent and in keeping with the density and pattern of development within the remainder of the village and, as such, would not have an adverse effect in this sense. The 'courtyard' arrangement of dwellings would not out of keeping in terms of pattern of development which is, in part, characterised by small cul-de-sac clusters sprouting off from Dorchester Road throughout the village.

The applicants have confirmed that each unit would be 3 bedroom 4 person accommodation, spread out over two storeys but with loft space in the roof. A rooflight on the front and rear roof slopes of each unit would be inserted. The minimum space standards (in accordance with the Nationally described space standards guidance released in March 2015, which is a material consideration) for a 3 bedroom 4 person 2 storey dwelling is 84 square metres and 90 square metres for a 3 storey building (including 2.5 square metres of storage). With accommodation in the loft, each unit is considered to be 2.5 storeys in nature and, with each unit having a total floor area of some 94.7 square metres, the dwellings would provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers. Furthermore, the provision of outdoor amenity space is also considered acceptable and consistent with other plots in the vicinity.

The landscaping is also considered to be appropriate, with the band of mature trees around the site being retained and other improvements made to soften the impact of the development. The details of the hard and soft landscaping can be secured by way of a condition.

The site is not within a Conservation Area and does not affect the setting of any listed buildings. A small corner of the site has been identified as having some local archaeological significance (field boundaries), although the most sensitive area shown on the plan below has already been built upon with the housing development on the south side of Dorchester Road. It is appropriate to place an informative on the consent to urge that any archaeological remains, if discovered, are recorded.

Although within the Dorset AONB (like most of the District), the proposed development would be read in context with the existing built form of Stratton and would also be relatively well screened upon approach from the west to not have an adverse effect on the scenic beauty of the landscape. The development would conserve the scenic beauty and character of the Dorset AONB and, thus, this would be conserved in accordance with local policy and para 115 of the NPPF.

### *Highway safety and parking*

Access to the site would be acquired from Dorchester Road via the existing road that skirts around number 72 and provides access to the block of garages.

Each unit would provide 2 parking spaces, with additional visitor parking spaces in the NE corner of the site. The parking provision and turning areas are considered appropriate and acceptable.

The DCC Highway Authority have been consulted on the scheme and, following amendments, have raised no objection with regard to visibility, highway safety and turning and parking provision, subject to conditions.

### *Impact on neighbouring amenity*

With regard to impact on surrounding neighbouring properties, the proposed dwellings would be sufficiently well separated from the terrace row (numbers 62-72 Dorchester Road) and sufficiently well separated and screened from properties within The Rise to not cause significance harm to the amenities of these neighbours in regards to overbearingness, loss of outlook, loss of light, overlooking and noise and disturbance.

Concerning the amenity of future occupiers of the new dwellings, it is appreciated that the pair of semi-detached dwellings (Units 4 and 5) would be within close proximity to the A37. These dwellings would, however, be adjacent to a slip road off the A37 which enters into the village and consideration should also be given to the fact that there are other dwellings within Sawyers Lane and Bull Close (to the east) which are a similar proximity to faster stretches of the A37. In this context, the proposed buildings would not be in an especially undesirable position relative to the A37. Furthermore, the site plan indicates that an acoustic fence would be erected along the northern boundary of the site and it is accepted that a suitably worded condition could be imposed to require details of this.

### *Other matters*

The applicants have submitted a BMP and Certificate of Approval from DCC. The former can be conditioned accordingly to ensure local biodiversity and ecology is protected.

### *Conclusion*

Having regard to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the proposal is not in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF indicates that planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

As the Council currently cannot demonstrate evidence of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites across the local authority area, relevant development plan policies for the supply of housing are out-of-date. Therefore, in line with the presumption

in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 14 of the NPPF, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

It is satisfied that the proposed development would meet the three dimensions to sustainable development. The design and layout of the scheme would be consistent and in keeping with the context of the village character. Furthermore, the development would not have any detrimental impacts on highway safety, neighbouring amenity and the local ecology. Matters related to these material considerations can be secured by conditions.

In consideration of these matters, it is satisfied that there are no adverse impacts which, either individually or together, are of sufficient weight to indicate that the development should be restricted. Overall, when taking the policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF as a whole, the adverse impacts of granting the proposed development are limited and that there are no material harms that significantly and demonstrably outweigh the substantial benefits which would result from the provision of new housing to boost supply as required by the Framework.

As such, the application is recommended for approval.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

Approval is recommended subject to conditions:

- 3 years commencement
- plans list
- material panel/samples inc. materials of bin/cycle store
- hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments
- highways
- surface water and foul drainage details
- archaeology
- tree protection during works
- BMP