

Western & Southern Area Planning Committee - 3 December 2020

Written Submissions

WP/19/01016/FUL - St Nicholas Church, Buxton Road,

Peter and Elizabeth Hillary

We live adjacent to the church site to the rear and our objections concern the shade created by the proposed flats on our property. The lack of privacy due to the flats close proximity, the loss of our views, and the loss of property value. At the outset of the proposed site, the flats were listed as affordable now the majority are going to be the usual second home or holiday lets and a small minority are affordable these facts alone defeat the original shortage of affordable housing argument.

Mark Packer

The planning meeting in July for development of the St Nicholas site was approved on the basis that these would be 18 affordable units. The planning committee all spoke of the dire need for affordable housing, and this over-rode the opposition of local residents on the scale and lack of any architectural merit of the building in a conservation area.

The main problems of the building - it's character, size, increased traffic, access issues and the overlooking of neighbouring gardens were dismissed by the committee because of the pressing need for social housing.

I emailed Councillor Wheatley about this and he stated that the planning permission was dependent on the developer obtaining a sufficient contribution from the developer to provide the subsidy, but that this was now only possible for 6 units, and Homes England would provide the the subsidy for the remaining 12 units.

I have to say it strikes me as odd that the developer can submit the plans for a massive block of flats and not have plans in place to provide the subsidy for it, leaving Homes England to pick up the tab, essentially subsidising the profits of the developer. If not, these will become luxury private flats.

My original objection contained the remarkably prescient paragraph;

It seems that the magical words 'affordable housing' are used to shoehorn development approval. These flats will not remain affordable for long. They will be sold at a premium as soon as it is feasible as they are highly desirable with their commanding views of Portland Harbour and close proximity to Castle Cove and Sandsfoot Beach They will be second homes in next to no time.

Why on earth are they unable to provide the subsidy? Surely they must have budgeted for this from the outset? They must already be making a healthy profit from some rabbit

hutch sized flats with minimal amenity space - and should provide a subsidy for a far greater proportion than 35%.

If the plans had been amended to remove the top floor and only build 15 flats then the developer would be in an even more parlous state. I have no objections to the site being built on, but serious questions must be asked about the financial viability of Sovereign Homes, particularly as the development should have started within 6 months of the planning permission being granted and no development has started, when Thornlow School just 500 metres away has ongoing construction despite covid.

Weymouth Town Council - Lucy Hamilton, Chairman of Planning & Licensing Committee

This matter was considered by Weymouth Town Council Planning and Licensing at our meetings on 14 January and 19 May 2020.

At our January meeting, we noted :

The Council warmly welcomes the affordable housing component of the development. The scale of the development is in keeping with the area and the design is modern. Therefore, the Council has no objections.

I'm concerned to note that the number of affordable units has reduced from 18 to 6. I understand that this is on a technicality, and that Sovereign aims to deliver all affordable units.

Given the inflation in the house prices by 6.5% in the past 12 months, can Dorset Council provide any guarantee that viability will put these 18 affordable units at risk?

As noted, there are currently around 1900 households on the Weymouth and Portland Housing Register, of these 408 have a need for two bedroom properties.

**WP/20/00477/FUL - Adult Education Centre, 45 Dorchester Road,
Weymouth, DT4 7JT**

Clive Gray - Dorset Council Architect & Project Manager

Dorset Council need to take steps to meet its statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for children in care and to increase the availability of accommodation for “Looked After Children” within Dorset.

Providing this residential home in Weymouth will improve the quality of service and outcome for young people within the area by adding to the required residential provision for local children.

At present, local children who need the use of such a provision, may be offered accommodation outside of the county away from family, friends and the reassurance of their surroundings. This can have a detrimental effect on development and well-being.

With the proposed development in place, children will be able to stay in their local area with minimal travel to meet friends and family. It will also provide the additional comfort of being able to continue their education at their existing schools, which will improve their prospects.

To achieve this, Dorset Council has identified the grounds of 45 Dorchester Road to locate an offsite constructed building for use as a Residential Children’s home. The adjacent existing house will also be used by Children’s Services for other services to support “Looked After Children” and “Care Leavers”.

The new Residential Children’s home will accommodate five children with the appropriate bedroom provision including en-suite, living, dining and kitchen facilities together with associated live-in staff facilities. Accommodation in 45 Dorchester Road will include five bedrooms.

Following the report regarding Residential Sufficiency for Dorset 2020, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Skills, Cabinet considered this project and approved it on the 03rd March 2020.

The proposal is for an appropriate, conforming residential use in a sustainable location that is well served by public transport and within comfortable walking distance of a range of local amenities.

The proposal has been assessed Dorset Council’s Planning Officer to be acceptable in design terms, would have a beneficial impact on biodiversity and would not adversely impact on either the safety or the efficiency of the local highway network.

There would not be any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity and the character and appearance of the Lodmoor Conservation Area would be enhanced.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with the development plan and planning permission should be granted.