

<b>Application Number:</b>	P/FUL/2021/03000
<b>Webpage:</b>	<a href="https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/">https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/</a>
<b>Site address:</b>	Cerne Abbas Care Centre Cerne Abbas Dorset DT2 7AL
<b>Proposal:</b>	Extension to rear & associated works to provide 20no. extra care accommodation units
<b>Applicant name:</b>	Avatara Inc Limited
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Verity Murphy
<b>Ward Member(s):</b>	Cllr Haynes

**1.0** The application is reported to Committee as Cerne Valley Parish Council have objected to the proposal.

**2.0 Summary of recommendation:**

Grant subject to conditions

**3.0 Reason for the recommendation:** as set out in paras 15.0 to 17.0 at the end of this report.

- Para 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that permission should be granted for sustainable development unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise
- Absence of 5-year land supply
- Proposal would result in extra care accommodation for which there is a demonstrable need under Policy HOUS5 of West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan.
- The proposals will result in no harm to heritage assets
- The location is considered to be sustainable and the proposal is acceptable in its design and general visual impact.
- There is not considered to be any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity.
- The proposed development has been designed to limit landscape impact and improve biodiversity.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application

**4.0 Key planning issues**

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application would contribute to 5-year housing land supply</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal would deliver extra care accommodation which is needed across district.</li> </ul>
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not required under this application</li> </ul>
Scale, design, impact on character and appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Layout, scale and design of the proposal is sensitive to its setting and reflective of the historic character of the existing building</li> </ul>
Impact on amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No impact on neighbouring amenity due to distance from other properties</li> </ul>
Impact on landscape or heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal has been designed to limit landscape impacts</li> <li>• No harm to heritage assets</li> </ul>
Economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension to existing business</li> <li>• Creation of additional employment opportunities</li> </ul>
Access and Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access will remain as existing</li> <li>• Parking provision in accordance with non-residential car parking standards.</li> </ul>
Flooding and Drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site in Flood Zone 1</li> <li>• Good infiltration on site</li> <li>• SUDs Hierarchy followed in drainage strategy</li> </ul>

## 5.0 Description of Site

The application site is situated to the North of Cerne Abbas Village on the western side of the A352. Access to the site is afforded via Acreman Street and is located within the northern corner of the site and is adjoined by a farm track (PRoW S13/34).

Casterbridge Manor Care Home is situated on the site and is a Grade II listed building. Casterbridge Manor is a former Union Workhouse constructed in the 1830s; it is a substantial and predominately 3 storey building fronting onto Acreman Street with outbuildings, parking and gardens to the rear (west). The building layout was originally a cross plan, but has been enclosed and extended over the years, but does still present an overall uniform appearance. The building is currently in use as a care home.

The application site is located approximately 250m north of the settlement boundary of the rural village of Cerne Abbas and is located within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site is located within the open countryside between two prominent hills: Weam Common Hill to the west of the site and Giant's Hill to the east on the far bank of the River Cerne. The site is within 500m of two Scheduled Monuments: Cerne Abbey and The Giant. The building's prominent location means that it not only forms a gateway into

Cerne Abbas, but it also features in long views from both Giant's Hill to the east and from the south west on Rowden Hill and along the valley floor; the latter is best appreciated from Sydling Road on the approach to Cerne Abbas

The site is rectangular and formed by an area of parking and gardens with grassland to the west. It is contained by native hedgerows to the north, west and south and the rear of Casterbridge Manor to the east. To the south is a partly enclosed garden area for use by the residents of Casterbridge Manor with occasional ornamental and fruit trees. The western half of the site is informal grassland. The proposed development area is approximately 110m west to east and 40m south to north. The boundaries to the west, north and south are defined by dense and tall native mixed hedgerows with occasional small trees. This vegetation provides a relatively high degree of screening into and across the site in the nearby lower-level landscape. Occasional partial views into the development site are possible from the more distant and elevated chalk ridges and hills to the west and east.

## **6.0 Description of Development**

Construction of a two-storey extension to the rear of the current building, with glazed links separating green-roofed blocks from each other and from the main building. The works would provide 20 No extra care units in total. The works would also involve minor alterations to the rear of the current building and associated landscaping and parking.

## **7.0 Relevant Planning History**

1/E/88/000398 and 000399 - Conversion of former union workhouse, now comprising 5 flats and incidental domestic purposes, to 10 flats and erect extensions, construct car parking area and improve vehicular access. Granted - August 1988

1/E/89/000718 and 000719- Erect extensions & make alterations to convert to residential nursing home and install LPG tank. Granted- December 1989.

1/E/90/000446 and 000447 - Erect extensions, & make alterations to convert to Residential Nursing home including close care units. Granted November 1990.

1/E/91/000306 and 000308 - Erect extension. Granted July 1991.

1/E/93/000125 and 000126 - Erect extension to rear. Granted May 1993.

WD/D/15/1382 and 15/1095- Provision of first floor to the atrium. Replacement of conservatory to rear courtyard & formation of a link between the southern single storey ranges (Retrospective). Granted September 2015.

## **8.0 List of Constraints**

Grade: II Listed Building: GIANT VIEW List Entry: 1119469.0;

Landscape Character Area; Chalk Valley and Downland; Cerne and Sydling Valley

Type: Neighbourhood Area; Name: Cerne Valley; Status Designated 04/02/2013;

Type: Neighbourhood Plan - Made; Name: Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan; Status Adopted 08/01/2015;

Wessex Water: High Risk of Foul Sewer Inundation

PDC Poole Dissolve Area

NE - AONB: Dorset;

NE - SSSI impact risk zone;

NE - SSSI (400m buffer): Giant Hill;

NE - SSSI: Hog Cliff ;

NE - SSSI: Court Farm, Sydling ;

NE - SSSI: Black Hill Down ;

NE - SSSI: Sydling Valley Downs ;

NE - SSSI: Giant Hill ;

NE - SSSI: Batcombe Down ;

EA - Poole Harbour Catchment Area

EA - Groundwater Source Protection Zone

Grade II listed building (statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty : (statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their landscapes - National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 & Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000)

## **9.0 Consultations**

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

### **Consultees**

#### **1. DC Ward Member - Chalk Valleys Ward**

- No comments received

## **2. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service - Liaison Officer**

- In the event the planning permission is granted for this development, the development would need to be designed and built to meet current Building Regulations requirements. The Authority raises the profile of these future requirements through this early opportunity and requests the comments made under B5 of Approved Document B, The Building Regulations 2010 be made available to the applicant/planning agent as appropriate.

## **3. DC – Landscape**

- Supportive of application, subject to conditions.
- Pre-application advice has been taken on-board and generally responded to in a positive way. The inclusion of additional viewpoints into the LVIA as requested has been beneficial and has resulted in additional mitigation measures being incorporated into the scheme.
- The proposed mitigation measures will break up the outline of the proposed development in important views, and help to assimilate it into the immediate and wider landscape setting. The proposals therefore generally comply with the requirements of part c) of para 130, and parts a) and b) of para 174 of the NPPF; Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan and; the environment objectives of the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan.

## **4. DC - Natural Environment Team**

- The Biodiversity Plan (BP) is approved by the Natural Environment Team

## **5. DC - Rights of Way Officer**

- No objection to the proposed development, as shown in the plans accompanying the application.
- However, throughout the duration of the development the full width of the public footpath must remain open and available to the public, with no materials or vehicles stored on the route.

## **6. DC - Highways**

- No objection to application

## **7. DC - Dorset Waste Partnership**

- No comments received

## **8. DC - Env. Services - Animal Licensing**

- No comment

## **9. DC - Conservation Officers**

- Supportive of application, subject to conditions
- The proposal will result in no harm to the listed building. The proposed extension is situated to the rear of the building and connected to it (i.e. the rebuilt and altered former isolation block) by a single-storey glazed link corridor. The newbuild elements comprise various two-storey blocks arranged into a loose cruciform, such that awkward rigidity or slavish copying of the original building is avoided, but its form reflected. Cruciform elements are also subtly incorporated into the elevations with the structural elements forming the balconies. The blocks are generally joined with slightly lower links, enabling them to stand better as individual masses and therefore not monolithic.
- Materials are generally recessive and are appropriate and contextual and will provide a low-impact extension.
- Proposal will result in no harm to the hill figure called 'The Giant' (Scheduled Monument). The modest scale of the extension, as well as its position fairly close to the existing building, mean that the new building will not be prominent or otherwise detrimental to the experience of the Giants setting from either direction. From the west (e.g. Viewpoints 5 and 10), the site for the extension is actually well screened by trees, further lessening any potential for distractive or detractive impacts on views towards the Giant.
- The proposal will result in no harm to the significance or setting of the Grade II listed Casterbridge Care Home (Giant's View).

## **10. DC - Tree Team**

- No comments received

## **11. DC - Policy - Urban Design**

- No comments received

## **12. Public Health Dorset**

- No comments received

## **13. Dorset AONB Team**

- Conditions are recommended

## **14. DC - Economic Development and Tourism**

- No comments received

**15. DC - Land Drainage**

- Holding objection
- Infiltration testing and ground water monitoring needs to be undertaken in the winter months.

**16. DC - Building Control North Team**

- No comments received

**17. Cerne Abbas Parish Council**

- Object to application
- Development outside settlement boundary
- The design is not high quality
- 20 units would not constitute small scale development
- Concerns with density of development and the car parking area
- Impact on listed building on AONB
- No enhancement of local services or facilities
- Impact on local surgery and transport network
- No affordable housing provision
- No evidence suggesting this type of accommodation is needed in Cerne Abbas
- No community benefit arising from scheme.
- Development contrary to Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan and The Local Plan

**18. Wessex Water**

- No objection to application

**19. Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group**

- No comments received

**20. Historic England**

- Defer to Dorset Council Conservation Officers for comments

## 21. DC - Adult social care

- No comments received

## 22. DC - Outdoor Recreation

### Representations received

Total - Objections	Total - No Objections	Total - Comments
0	0	0

Petitions Objecting	Petitions Supporting
0	0

## 10.0 Relevant Policies

Development Plan

West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (WDWLP)

INT1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
ENV1 Landscape, seascape and sites of geological interest  
ENV2 Wildlife and habitats  
ENV4 Heritage assets  
ENV5 Flood risk  
ENV9 Pollution and contaminated land  
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  
SUS1 The level of economic and housing growth  
SUS2 Distribution of development  
SUS5 Neighbourhood development plans  
ECON1 Provision of employment  
HOUS3 Open market housing mix  
HOUS5 Residential care accommodation  
COM1 Making sure new development makes suitable provision for community infrastructure  
COM7 Creating a safe and efficient transport network  
COM9 Parking standards in new development  
COM10 The provision of utilities service infrastructure

Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan 2015

Policy 1 Housing in Defined Development Boundaries



Policy 2 High Quality Design  
Policy 3 Designated Development Boundary for Cerne Abbas  
Policy 6 Flood Risk  
Policy 9 New Businesses in keeping with the Cerne Valley Economic Strategy

### **Material Considerations**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021**

1. Introduction
2. Achieving sustainable development
4. Decision making
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well designed places
14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### **Other material considerations**

- Cerne Abbas, Charminster, Sydling St Nicholas and Godmanstone Conservation Area Appraisal

### **11.0 Human rights**

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

### **12.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty**

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

The proposal is for extra care accommodation for older people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act and will contribute towards meeting their particular needs.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. This proposal would be for older people with health requirements, and therefore, it would help contribute towards the provision of specialist accommodation for persons with protected characteristics.

### **13.0 Financial benefits**

N/a

### **14:0 Climate Change**

The proposed extension contains several design features which seek to improve sustainability on site and limit climate impacts. The extension maximises opportunities for natural lighting and passive solar heating through the use of glazing on the south side of the building; and has overhangs to provide shading and reduce overheating in the summer. The units also have internal windows from the kitchen to the corridor to gain borrowed light in what are, technically, internal rooms.

The materials used within the construction of the extension are natural, comprising stone and wood cladding. These materials require much less energy-intensive methods to process into construction products which further helps to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the development.

The proposal also incorporates Sustainable Urban Drainage principals through the use of green roofs and permeable surfaces, as detailed in the submitted drainage strategy.

### **15.0 Planning Assessment**

#### **Principle**

The application site is not located within a defined settlement boundary and is within open countryside. In this location new residential development would usually be resisted, and an objection has been received in relation to countryside setting of the application site. However, in this instance the development would be an extension to an existing building for a C2 (extra care) use.

Policy HOUS5 of WDWLP demonstrates that there is an increasing number of older people within the plan area and care accommodation is vitally important. The importance of more flexible models of accommodation is recognised, and there is a move towards providing increased opportunities for vulnerable adults that maintain independence, choice and control over their lives, for examples through ‘extra care’ supported accommodation services. Extra care facilities provide self-contained accommodation grouped on site providing an extensive range of facilities over and

beyond those found in ordinary sheltered housing. The strategic vision of the Council is to support the building of extra care housing developments within defined settlement boundaries.

The proposed development would be located within the countryside and would conflict the spatial strategy of HOUS5, and the housing objectives of Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan which requires new development to be located within the defined development boundary. However, HOUS5 demonstrates the need for this type of accommodation within the plan area and the proposal is an extension to an existing building ; therefore the principle of allowing development in this location must also take into account that the existing care home is a local business and the proposal would represent an extension of the existing premises, which is permissible under Policy ECON1 of the Local Plan.

Furthermore, the proposed development would also count towards the 5-year housing land supply for the West Dorset Area. Dorset Council, with reference to the area that was West Dorset DC, cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. As such, this planning application needs to be considered in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 11 (d) (the presumption in favour of sustainable development). This reads as follows:

*d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date granting permission unless:*

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

Whilst the policies of the Local Plan are considered to be most important in the determination of this application, they are considered to be out of date, however this does not mean they have no weight or relevance. The weight to be given to them is a matter of planning judgement for the decision-maker in a titled balance exercise where the benefits of additional housing will be given due weight as well. The application does not benefit from the protections of para 14 of NPPF as the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan became part of the development plan more than two years ago in 2015.

It is considered that the benefits of allowing the proposed development in terms of providing extra care accommodation for which there is a demonstrable need, the economic benefits of extending the existing care home and the contribution of the development towards the 5 year housing land supply for the area, would outweigh the harm of an extension to an existing building within the open countryside.

## **Affordable Housing**

It is considered the proposed close care apartments represent a C2 use class (residential institutions) rather than C3 (dwelling houses). The proposed apartments will offer

accommodation with care provision to older persons with the level of care response significantly exceeding that found in C3 market housing. The use of the site for C2 purposes will be secured via condition to ensure that the apartments can only be used by people in need of care. Therefore, no affordable housing contribution is proposed which is not considered to conflict with Policy HOUS1 of the Local Plan.

## **Layout and Design**

The proposed extension will be located to the rear of the existing building and is connected to it by a single-storey glazed link corridor. The proposed extension is focused around four individual blocks which are arranged into a loose cruciform shape to echo the historical layout of the existing building. This layout will allow for a central circulation axis creating a visual and physical link between the existing and proposed spaces.

The proposed extension will have two storeys, but will sit lower than the main ridge height of the existing building to ensure it remains subservient. It will be separated from the main building by the proposed glazed corridor which helps separate the existing and extended elements of the scheme. The elevations and overall form of the building are broken up by using linking features and recessive elements. This offers relief in the mass of the extension and ensures that it does not present as one continuous block of built form to the rear of the site.

The proposed extension is considered to sit comfortably alongside the existing building, but also to the countryside setting of the site. The overall materials palette is recessive, comprising stone-clad ground floors and timber-cladding to the first floors, as well as green hipped roofs. It is considered that this is appropriate for the context of the site and results in a low-impact extension.

Concerns have been expressed in relation to lack of the private amenity for occupants of the extra care apartments. Whilst private amenity space for each unit would fall below the suggested 20% under Policy HOUS5 of the Local Plan, the layout of the building on the site allows for a significant amount of shared communal space, comprising south facing communal gardens and terrace, seating, a communal kitchen/allotment garden and informal spaces with lawns, paths, and naturalistic planting.

Parking for 52 vehicles will be located to the west of the new buildings, and a parking space for the communal minibus will be at the front of the property. There will also be a separate building to be used for storage and bins, and covered bike stand areas.

It is considered that the layout and design of the extension responds carefully and uniquely to its specific context and site constraints. The twin approach of keeping the new elements as close as possible to the existing building, but also maintaining a sense of separation, enables the extension to be read as part of the building in close and long views. It also retains an element of undeveloped space to the rear of the plot, resulting in a gradual attenuation of built form as it progresses further from the road into the rural setting. The proposal reflects the character, scale and form of the surrounding development and the design and layout of the scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies ENV10, ENV12, ENV15, ENV16 and HOUS5 of the Local Plan.

## **Impact on Listed Building, Scheduled Monument and Conservation Area**

Of pertinence to this application proposal in the context of the surroundings are matters pertaining to heritage noting that there is Scheduled Monument (The Giant) within 500 metres of the application site and the existing building on site is Grade II listed (Cerne Abbas Care Centre). As such due regard has been given to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990) which confirms that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Listed Building/Structure. Case law has established that where an authority finds that a development proposal would harm the a listed building or its setting, it must give that harm “considerable importance and weight”. The historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance further outlines the role of the Local Planning Authority in considering the effects of new development that are in the vicinity of or affect the setting of listing buildings and heritage assets. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset in considering the impact of a proposal on its significance (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Policy EN4 of ensure that development conserves and enhances heritage assets and their settings.

### ***Cerne Abbas Care Home (Grade II Listed)***

The building has undergone various alterations and extensions, the most notable being additional storeys to the wings and a rearward extension and rebuilding/enlarging of the former isolation wing. Though the space to the rear of the building remains undeveloped, the original garden has been lost to car parking and other external landscaping and surfacing. They key elements of its significance are its cruciform plan, with all its historical associations, and its deliberately isolated position within the parish. The latter is particularly appreciable in views of the building from the surrounding landscape.

The proposed extension is situated to the rear of the building and connected to it by a single-storey glazed link corridor. The newbuild elements comprise various two-storey blocks arranged into a loose cruciform, such that awkward rigidity or slavish copying of the original building is avoided, but its form reflected. Cruciform elements are also subtly incorporated into the elevations with the structural elements forming the balconies. The blocks are generally joined with slightly lower links, enabling them to stand better as individual masses and therefore not monolithic.

Like the design, the materials are generally recessive, comprising stone-clad ground floors and timber-cladding to the first floors, as well as green hipped roofs. Though these materials are generally not visible on the main building, they are appropriate and contextual give the desire to provide a low-impact extension; to have proposed masonry and full hipped roofs would perhaps have extended the form of the historic building to the point where the significance and prominence of the original blocks were blurred. Taking the above into account, it is not considered that the extension will be detrimental to the building and we therefore consider that the proposals will result in no harm to the assets significance, in accordance with Section 16 para 199 of the NPPF, S.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy EN4 of The Local Plan and the historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance.

### ***Hill Figure called 'The Giant' (Scheduled Monument)***

The Parish council has objected to the impact of the proposal on the nearby Scheduled Monument. The key element of the monument's setting are the long views to and from it permitted by its elevated, hillside position. Some of these views are provided in the LVIA (e.g. Viewpoints 10, 17, 18), which illustrate both the general lack of development in the Giants setting outside Cerne Abbas, but also the prominence and isolation of Casterbridge Manor within that view. The views also show the slightly rising topography on which the manor sits.

The proposals will result in additional built form to the rear of the manor which will be visible from the Giant and in longer views towards it. However, the modest scale of the extension, as well as its position fairly close to the existing building, mean that the new building will not be prominent or otherwise detrimental to the experience of the Giant's setting from either direction. From the west, the site for the extension is very well screened by trees, further lessening any potential for distractive or detractive impacts on views towards the Giant. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposals will result in no harm to the asset's significance, in accordance with Section 16 para 199 of the NPPF, S.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy EN4 of The Local Plan and the historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance.

### ***Cerne Abbas Conservation Area***

Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The building and proposed extension are situated outside the Conservation Area. They are located on one of its valley approaches, though the main visual aspects of the conservation area's setting are the distant and elevated views into the historic core from the surrounding landscape.

The position of the extension and its screening behind vegetation mean that it would not be visible on the northern approach to Cerne Abbas and, as outlined above, its visual impact in longer views will be minimal.

The proposal, in respect of its appearance, size, siting, detailing and the materials used is not considered to involve the erosion of character of the Conservation Area. Based upon the above assessment it is considered that the proposed development would result in no harm to the character, appearance and historic interest of the Conservation Area in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in compliance with Policy ENV4 of The Local Plan and para 16 of the NPPF and the historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance.

### ***Landscape***

The site is located in a Chalk Valley and Downland Landscape Type and a Landscape Character Area (LCA) Cerne & Sydling Valley (Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment). The overall management objective for the LCA is to conserve the strong

pattern of existing features, whilst restoring woodlands and meadows, chalk grasslands and boundary features. To maintain undeveloped rural character, careful consideration should be given to the design of developments.

Concerns have been expressed in relation to the impact of development on the landscape character area and the AONB. The applicant has submitted a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which has informed a series of design elements which have been incorporated into the proposed extension.

The proposed extension has been located away from the higher and more visually sensitive western parts of the site and is located close to the existing built form on the site. The mass of the proposed accommodation has moved centrally into the site to reduce the visibility of new development from sensitive key viewpoints. This has allowed the extension to be partially concealed behind the large mass of the existing and former workhouse and boundary hedgerows.

Green roofs to all areas of the proposed building have been proposed to further soften the building into its context and reduce potential visual impact from distant viewpoints. This also ensures that the overall mass and the landscape context of Casterbridge Manor is preserved as much as possible.

The proposed cladding will be muted in colour with the pallet selected to respond to its landscape context and ensuring that it does not significantly affect the current relationship between Casterbridge Manor and its surrounding landscape.

The proposed car parking area will be located in the western section of the site, this will allow for additional tree planting and hedging to screen and break up views of the parking areas. The planting of hedges and deciduous trees in key areas within and adjacent to the car parking in the western sections of the site will aim to screen and break up views to the car parking from elevated location to the east, as well as providing screening to the proposed buildings from the west.

It is considered that the proposed mitigation measures will break up the outline of the proposed development in important views and help to assimilate it into the immediate and wider landscape setting. The proposal is not considered to have a significant effect on the AONB. The proposals therefore comply with the requirements of part c) of para 130, and parts a) and b) of para 174 of the NPPF; Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan and the environment objectives of the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Biodiversity**

An ecology survey of the site has been undertaken which has informed the proposals for the site. The survey found that boundary hedges and trees provide a range of suitable habitats for nesting birds, common reptiles, bats and invertebrates to forage, commute and/or shelter. No protected species, evidence of protected species or other habitats for protected species, were found on the rest of the site.

The ecological value was therefore assessed to be low, with the only potential noted being the suitability of the hedgerow boundaries as suitable habitats for breeding birds.

Notwithstanding this, a number of key mitigation and enhancement measure are proposed and accepted by the Natural Environment Team. These measures include:

- retention and protection of the hedges, and additional planting (of at least 75m)
- sensitive lighting scheme
- bat and swift boxes
- bee bricks
- native planting within the landscaped areas
- hedgehog friendly gravel boards / holes
- green roofs on the new buildings
- sixteen new trees are to be planted on site – to be native species and to include a minimum of four native fruit trees

The proposal accords with Policy ECON2 of the Local Plan in that the development would enhance biodiversity on site and will be incorporated in and around the application site.

## **Highways and Parking**

Vehicular access to the site will remain as existing and will be from Acreman Street. The site benefits from a 43 visibility in each direction within the 30mph Zone. There will be a new main entrance into the building with a vehicle drop off point and the main car park will be to the rear of the site. Vehicular circulation will be kept to the top and rear of the site to maximise the communal garden spaces. It is important to note that Dorset Council Highways Engineers have no objection to the proposal.

The proposal will create 38 additional car parking spaces on site. The proposed full-time staff will increase to 104 with the addition of the new extension. This creates a need for 26 staff car parking spaces which can be accommodated within the application site. The remainder of the car parking spaces on site (27 spaces) will be for visitor parking for the residents of the care home as a whole; this works out at 1 space per 3 visitors which is in accordance with Dorset Council Non-Residential Car Parking Standards. In addition, a total of 38 secure bike storage spaces are also proposed (1.5 bikes per unit with an additional 8 spaces for staff and visitors). The proposal accords with COM9 of the Local Plan.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

The site of the proposal is shown to fall within Flood Zone 1, as indicated by the Environment Agency's (EA) indicative flood maps. Whilst according to the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping there is no theoretical risk of pluvial flooding to the site up to the 1-in-1000 year rainfall event.

The application submission is accompanied by a drainage strategy which follows the SuDS hierarchy and is prioritising the use of infiltration as a means of managing surface water runoff from the development. Infiltration techniques such as green roofs, permeable paving and underground geo-cellular tanks are proposed.



The LLFA has raised a holding objection on the basis that no infiltration tests or groundwater monitoring being undertaken on the site. In response to this, the applicant has submitted the results of site infiltration testing. These tests were carried out in to BRE365 standard, and prove that the ground has good permeability, at a depth of 3.0m below the surface, with a percolation rate of  $3.37 \times 10^{-5}$  m/s.

Given this good permeability coupled with the fact the site is in flood zone 1, it is considered that it would be appropriate to condition ground water monitoring to the consent. The proposal accords with ENV5 of The Local Plan.

### **Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan**

The Parish have raised concerns regarding the proposed development and how it accords with the Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan. It is accepted that the proposal would be located outside the defined development boundary and would represent a large-scale development, however the proposal will result in new extra care accommodation which will in turn create additional employment opportunities within Cerne Abbas. The strategic vision of the Neighbourhood Plan includes an aim to satisfy the diverse housing needs for all by meeting the changing demographic and social requirements, which this proposal would achieve. Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to support the local economy through its existing businesses, by encouraging new enterprises and facilities which enhance commercial effectiveness and employment opportunities, again the proposal would achieve this. The proposal is also considered to protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the Valley, including its landscape, geological assets, built heritage, archaeological sites and wild-life habitats in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **16.0 Conclusion**

Whilst the application site is located within the countryside, the proposed development would result in much needed extra care accommodation for which there is a demonstrable need. The proposals would also contribute to the areas 5-year housing land supply and would result in an economic benefit through allowing an expansion of an existing business which will provide additional employment opportunities.

The proposed extension is sensitive to its setting, the existing Grade II listed building on site, Scheduled Monument, AONB and Conservation Area. It is considered that the proposed extension is high quality in design and will result in an attractive and sympathetic addition to the existing care home building. The proposal will result in landscape and biodiversity improvements on site.

Overall, the benefits of allowing the proposal are considered to outweigh the harm caused by allowing an extension to an existing building in the countryside. The proposal accords with relevant policies of The Development Plan, Cerne Valley Neighbourhood Plan, Cerne Abbas Conservation Area Appraisal, Sections 66 and 72 of Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act 1990, NPPF, Non-Residential Car Parking Standards and Planning Practice Guidance.

## **17.0 Recommendation**

**Recommendation:** Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Proposed Floor Plans Drawing 1819091 10 REV D

Site Location, Block and Site Plan Drawing 1819091 11 REV G

Proposed Elevations Drawing 1819091 12 REV C

Measured Floor Plans Drawing 7214/4

Proposed and Existing Levels, Indicative External Lighting Plan Drawing 1819091 14

Proposed Floor Plans Drawing 1819091 10 REV E

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The building shall be used for C2 extra care accommodation and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class C of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order.

Reason: The Council considers an unrestricted Class C use may not be compatible with the living conditions of surrounding residential properties.

4. Prior to development above damp-proof course level, details and samples of all external facing materials for the walls, windows and roofs shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall proceed in accordance with such materials as have been approved.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance of the development.

5. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, above damp course level, full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include where relevant:

- (i) Existing vegetation that is to be retained/removed;
- (ii) means of enclosure;
- (iii) car parking layouts;
- (iv) other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- (v) hard surfacing materials;
- (vi) minor artefacts and structures (eg furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, pergolas, retaining structures, steps/ramps, signs, lighting, etc);
- (vii) existing and proposed functional services above and below ground (eg drainage, power, communications cables, pipelines, etc indicating lines, manholes, supports, etc);
- (viii) planting plans and schedules which should include the biodiversity mitigation and enhancement planting identified in the Biodiversity Plan produced by KP Ecology Ltd and approved by NET 25/05/2021, and a soil preparation and planting specification

If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree/plant, that tree/plant or any tree/plant planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies (or becomes in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority seriously damaged or defective) another tree/plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be replanted in the first available planting season unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to any variation.

Reason: Landscaping is considered essential in order to preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality

6. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, all existing trees and hedges shown on approved plan 1819091 14 shall be retained in accordance with BS 5837:2005 and reinforced where necessary in accordance with a safeguarding scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These approved safeguarding measures shall be retained for the duration of construction works and building operations. No unauthorised access or placement of goods, fuels or chemicals, soil or other material shall take place within the tree protection zone(s). Any such reinforcement shall be carried out in the first planting season (November to March) following commencement of the development or within a timescale to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next

planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that trees and hedges to be retained are adequately protected from damage to health and stability throughout the construction period and in the interests of amenity

7. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, above damp course level, a schedule of landscape maintenance covering a minimum period of five years following substantial completion of the development (including details of the arrangements for its implementation) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development's landscaping shall be managed in accordance with the approved schedule.

Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by the proper maintenance of existing and/or new landscape features

8. A Landscape Management Plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, maintenance schedules and a timetable for implementation and/or phasing; for all landscape areas (other than small, privately owned domestic gardens,) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development or any phase of the development, whichever is the sooner. Thereafter the Landscape Management Plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that due regard is paid to the continuing enhancement and maintenance of amenity afforded by landscape features of communal, public, nature conservation or historical significance.

9. No lighting shall be installed until details of the lighting scheme have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting scheme must include the following:

- a) Lighting levels within five metres of the N, W, S boundaries will not exceed one lux to create a dark buffer zone.
- b) Low pressure sodium lighting will be used and light levels will be kept as low as possible (between 1 and 3 lux).
- c) Lighting will be directed to where it is needed (away from boundaries through the design of the luminaire and by using accessories such as cowls or hoods.
- d) Lights will not be on constantly throughout the night creating dark periods to allow bats to continue foraging without light spill affecting them.

e) Light sources should emit minimal ultra-violet light, peak higher than 550nm and be of a warm/ neutral colour <2700 Kelvin.

Thereafter the lighting scheme shall be installed operated and maintained in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To protect bats and biodiversity on site.

10. No development shall take place until a Construction Management Plan (CMP) has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, to include details of:

1. Construction traffic routes in the local area
2. Parking and turning of operative, construction, and visitor vehicles
3. Loading and unloading of plant and materials
5. Storage of plant and materials
6. Programme of works (including measures for traffic management)
8. Provision of boundary hoarding and lighting including construction lighting
9. Measures to protect the listed building as necessary
10. Details of measure to be taken to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction
11. The handling and management of construction waste

The development of the site and the operation of construction shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details during the construction period.

Reason: To ensure that development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users or result in any other significant harm to the amenity of local residents, or to existing natural features.

11. No development is to take place until a suitable drainage design, based on the principles within the Drainage Strategy and the results of ground water monitoring (to be undertaken), including detailed plans and calculations has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the LLFA. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drainage design.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of foul and surface water drainage.

12. Before the development hereby approved is first occupied or utilised the turning and parking shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter, these areas must be permanently maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for the purposes specified.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate development of the site in the interest of highway safety.