

Application Number:	P/FUL/2023/01474
Webpage:	Planning application: P/FUL/2023/01474 - dorsetforyou.com (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
Site address:	Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, Clay Lane, Beaminster, DT8 3BU
Proposal:	Erect side extension to existing fire station and creation of 2no. off street parking spaces
Applicant name:	Mr Simon Callan
Case Officer:	Charlotte Loveridge
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Knox

1.0 The application relates to land that is partially in Dorset Council ownership and the application is therefore being reported to Committee in accordance with Dorset Council's Constitution.

2.0 Summary of recommendation:

Grant planning permission subject to conditions.

3.0 Reason for the recommendation:

- The location is considered to be sustainable.
- There is no harm to the designated heritage assets and the setting of the Conservation Area is preserved as is the wider natural beauty of the Dorset AONB.
- There is not considered to be any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity or highway safety.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Principle support for the scheme is provided by policies SUS2 & COM2 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015) which all seek to support community buildings and structures in appropriate locations.
Scale, design, impact on character and appearance	The scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area is modest and appropriate to the location in accordance with policies ENV10 & ENV12.

Impact on amenity	It is considered that the use of the building has an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity, as does the scale and design of the proposed extension in accordance with ENV16 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015).
Impact on landscape or heritage assets	<p>The scheme results in no harm to the wider natural beauty of the AONB, which is protected in accordance with policy ENV1 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015).</p> <p>The scheme results in no harm to the setting of designated heritage assets, and the nearby Conservation Area is preserved in accordance with policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015).</p>
Economic benefits	The proposals will provide enhanced facilities for personnel on the site with no loss of service.
Access and Parking	The proposal includes the addition of two dedicated off-road parking spaces, whilst it will remove an on-street parking space, this will not significantly impact or change the existing provisions. It will not alter vehicular routes in the vicinity.
Other Matters	Area of low flood risk, hedgehogs noted at adjoining property, Beaminster Town Council comments on police presence.

5.0 Description of Site

- The Dorset Fire & Rescue Service site lies on a corner site on the northern side of Clay Lane (B3163), with the western edge of the site on Hogshill Mead.
- The roughly square shaped site covers 931m² in total.
- The long-term use of the site is as the town's Fire & Rescue Service base and fire station.
- The tallest building on the site is the fire station main appliance bay with apex roof with the flat roofed secondary appliance bay and gym in a lower building on the eastern side. These both have roller doors frontages facing onto Clay Lane. On the western side of the main appliance bay is the flat roofed service rooms including the comms room, meeting room, muster bay and toilet facilities.
- The rear north and eastern side of the site comprises of a tarmac yard area, with a wide tarmac access drive directly onto Clay Lane for fire appliances with a narrower vehicular access at the eastern corner of the site onto Clay Lane. There are grassed areas fronting onto Clay Lane and Hogshill Mead.
- The site is relatively level, along with Hogshill Mead to the west. The fire station buildings sit on ground slightly higher than Clay Lane, and the road

then drops down eastwards towards the mini roundabout at the junctions with Tunnel Road which heads north and Hogshill Street that continues east.

- There are no trees on the site or near to the site that would be affected by the proposals.
 - There is a training tower in the north eastern corner of the site.
 - There are no boundaries on the southern and western sides of the site, the eastern boundary is a 1.2m high chain link fence and hedging. The northern boundary with 2 Hogsmill Mead that lies adjacent to the rear vehicular access into the site is a 1.8m close boarded wooden fence.
-
- The surrounding area is an established residential area comprising dwellings which vary in their style and age.
 - Hogshill Mead comprises of two storey 1950/60s ex-local authority brick housing in semis and terraces slightly set back from the road with small front gardens.
 - The southern side of Clay Lane is largely older properties within the Beaminster Conservation Area fronting the pavement with some modern in-fill properties. Again, with a variety of terraces, semis and detached properties and mainly two storey although having varying heights.
 - To the east of the fire station site as it drops down towards the town centre, and Barnes Lane opposite has a lot more tree features, including to the northern side of Hogshill Mead which can be seen from Clay Lane.
 - The site is on the western side of Beaminster, out of the main shopping streets in the centre, but is on the main road (B3163) that goes west out of the town to Broadwindsor.
 - St Mary's Primary School lies approximately 250m west of the fire station site on the northern side of Clay Lane, with their playing fields fronting onto Clay Lane with the school buildings set back in the site.
 - There are few commercial/business properties along Clay Lane, with a peppering of guest houses, a building contractor's site and Hogshill Stores (opposite the school playing field) along the southern side, with the new Clipper Tea factory unit on the far western edge of the built area of Beaminster as you leave the town.

6.0 Description of Development

Erect side extension to existing fire station to provide new dedicated firefighter and police facilities of office, lecture room and welfare facilities. The proposal also includes the creation of 2no. off street parking spaces for fire service and police vehicles; and a hardstanding area to relocate the firefighter's charity bin.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

1/W/1995/0564 - Decision GRA - Decision Date: 04/01/1996
Provision of replacement drill tower

1/D/09/000784 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 03/07/2009
Replace 2 garage doors with 2 windows and insert doors

1/D/10/001005 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 11/08/2010
Extend hardstanding area. Alterations to entrance & access road

8.0 List of Constraints

Within Defined Development Boundary;

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Dorset (*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*)

Close to Beaminster Conservation Area - Distance: 10.79m (*CA boundary runs along southern side of Clay Lane - statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*)

Wildlife Present: West European Hedgehog ; - Distance: 2.49

9.0 Consultations

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

Consultees

1. **DC Highways** - No objection. Conditions and informatives are recommended.
3. **Beaminster Town Council** – Support the application.

Representations received

None received.

10.0 Duties

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard be had to the desirability of preserving any Listed Building, or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires that regard is had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

11.0 Relevant Policies

Development Plan

Adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan:

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- INT1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- ENV1 - Landscape, seascape & sites of other geological interest
- ENV2 - Wildlife and habitats
- ENV10 - The landscape and townscape setting
- ENV12 - The design and positioning of buildings
- ENV16 - Amenity
- SUS2 - Distribution of development
- COM2 - New or improved local community buildings and structures
- COM7 - Creating a safe & efficient transport network

Material Considerations

Neighbourhood Plan:

Beaminster Neighbourhood Plan – In preparation – limited weight applied to decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021):

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4. Decision taking: Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy', paragraphs 84 and 85 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' promotes the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, through conversion of existing buildings, the erection of well-designed new buildings, and supports sustainable tourism and leisure developments where identified needs are not met by existing rural service centres.
- Section 11 'Making effective use of land'

- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 126 – 136 advise that:
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.
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.
Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.
- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'
- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty (para 176). Decisions in Heritage Coast areas should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation (para 173). Paragraphs 179-182 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.
- Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- When considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (para 199). The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 203).

Other material considerations

Emerging Local Plans:

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

Supplementary Planning Document/Guidance:

All of Dorset:
Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment
Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance for West Dorset Area:
WDDC Design & Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines (2009)
Landscape Character Assessment February 2009 (West Dorset)

12.0 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.

13.0 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.

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.

- Access - the proposal includes creating an accessible WC on the site which ensures that people with disabilities or mobility impairments have access to toilet facilities on the site.

14.0 Financial benefits

Short term construction employment. General economy benefits from providing a service to protect the local and wider community in all manner of emergencies.

15.0 Environmental Implications

A biodiversity checklist was submitted for the application but did not trigger the requirement for any additional surveys to be carried out. It is not considered that the proposals would have any environmental implications.

16.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of development

In principle support for the scheme is provided by policy SUS2 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015) which seeks to support appropriate development within defined development boundaries; also, policy COM2 which supports proposals for improved local community buildings or structures. However, this is also subject to other material considerations.

Scale, design, impact on character and appearance

The scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area is modest and appropriate to the location. The proposed extension will be 37m², giving an overall floorspace of the entire building of 241m². The proposed materials will be render and roofing felt to match the existing. New and replacement windows will be white coloured aluminium frames to match the existing. The proposed vehicle access and hard standing would be tarmacadam.

The two windows to the lecture room on the western side of the proposed extension would have mirror film which would enable light into the room but also give privacy as there is likely to be sensitive information on display at times during its use.

New signage would be installed on the front southern elevation of the proposed extension, which would include the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue logo and station name in a raised relief style.

Whilst the proposed extension, combined with the vehicle access and provision of two dedicated parking spaces on the western edge of the site (next to the existing access into the rear yard area from Hogshill Mead) will mean that there will be a loss of some of the existing grassed area, it is a relatively modest amount and there will still be sufficient grassed areas to the front of the site to soften the impact of the building.

As such the proposal is considered to accord with policies ENV10 & ENV12 of the local plan.

Impact on amenity

No comments were received from any neighbouring properties.

The existing use of the site is for the Dorset Fire & Rescue Service and this structure will not create any additional impact on neighbouring amenity. It will not have an overshadowing or overbearing impact or create a loss of privacy on neighbouring properties. The proposed uses of the new development will not generate an additional level of activity or noise beyond the current use of the site and as such the proposals accord with policy ENV16 of the local plan.

Impact on heritage assets

The application site is situated just outside of the Beaminster Conservation Area. The boundary for the Conservation Area is on the opposite (southern) side of Clay Lane, and on the eastern side of the residential properties 20-24 Clay Lane that are adjacent to the Dorset Fire & Rescue Service site. The closest listed building to the site is the Grade II listed The Old Vicarage, approximately 65 metres to the south east of the proposed development on the corner of Clay Lane and Barnes Lane, which is set in large grounds which have mature tree screening on the roadside boundaries.

Given the nature of the proposals, and the separation distances, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Beaminster Conservation Area is preserved and that no harm is caused to the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building in accordance with policy ENV4 of the local plan.

Impact on landscape

The simple, single storey flat roofed design of the extension on the north western side of the existing Dorset Fire & Rescue Service building, along with the creation of two additional parking spaces will not harm the character or setting of the Dorset AONB, in accordance with policy ENV1 of the local plan.

Economic benefits

The economic benefits are that the improved facilities for Dorset Fire & Rescue Service personnel will be able to continue to provide a service to protect the local and wider community in all manner of emergencies.

Impact on highway safety/public access

The proposal includes two additional dedicated off-road parking spaces for police/fire vehicles and whilst it will remove an on-street parking space, this will not significantly impact or change the existing provisions in the vicinity. This increase of 2 spaces on site will give a total of 7 parking spaces on the site. It will not alter vehicular routes in the vicinity in accordance with policy COM7 of the local plan.

The consultation response from Highways recommends that a condition is added along with an informative note regarding the construction of a vehicle crossing that is constructed to the specification of the Highway Authority in order to comply with Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980.

Other matters

The consultation received from Beaminster Town Council was pleased to see enhanced premises for the Fire & Police service personnel and noted that Members had made an observation that there is currently no visible indication as to when there is a police presence in the building and queried whether this could be addressed as part of the development.

However, the application is being determined on the basis of the information as submitted, and the observations of the Town Council would be an operational matter for the Dorset Fire & Rescue Service and not a planning matter.

The area lies within an area at a low risk of all types of flooding.

Hedgehogs are present near the site at a residential property to the east, however the proposals would not create any additional detriment to them given the existing use of the site.

17.0 Conclusion

It is considered having regard to the scale, mass and design of the proposed extension that the development would have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area and the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and provides a public benefit of creating additional and improved facilities for the Dorset Fire & Rescue Service personnel. The application would also create no harm to any designated heritage assets, and the setting of the Beaminster Conservation Area will be preserved, as will the wider natural beauty of the Dorset AONB. Hence the development accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021); and policies INT1, ENV1, ENV2, ENV10, ENV12, ENV16, SUS2, COM2, COM7 & COM9 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) and the relevant sections of the NPPF (2021).

18.0 Recommendation

Grant planning permission 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:

Location Plan – Dwg. No. 7003

Existing and Proposed Site and Floor Plans – Dwg No. 004 Rev B

Existing and Proposed Elevations – Dwg. No. 005 Rev D

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

3. Before the development is occupied or utilised the first 5.00 metres of the vehicle access, measured from the rear edge of the highway and into the site, must be laid out and constructed to a specification which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that a suitably surfaced and constructed access to the site

is provided that prevents loose material being dragged and/or deposited onto the adjacent carriageway causing a safety hazard.

4. Before the development hereby approved is occupied or utilised the turning/manoeuvring and parking shown on Drawing Number 004 Rev B must have been constructed. 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 and to ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted upon.

Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.

Highways

The vehicle crossing serving this proposal (that is, the area of highway land between the nearside carriageway edge and the site's road boundary) must be constructed to the specification of the Highway Authority in order to comply with Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980. The applicant should contact Dorset Highways by telephone at 01305 221020, by email at dorsethighways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, or in writing at Dorset Highways, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ, before the commencement of any works on or adjacent to the public highway.