

Western & Southern Area Planning Committee - 12 August 2020

Written Submissions

WD/D/20/000228 - Land at Jesmond Farm, Monmouth Gardens, Beaminster

Rachel Bird (Agent)

Morning Councillors. This statement is made by the Agent for the application in support of the proposals.

This application has been carefully prepared by the Applicant and the project team. We are pleased to read that the proposal has been recommended for approval subject to conditions by your Authority's Case Officer.

Concerns have been raised by the Town Council with regard to potential flooding on the site. Both the Environment Agency and your Authority's Technical Services team however raise no objection to the proposals in this regard. The proposed dwelling is sited on land within Flood Zone 1, which is the least liable to flooding, with only a short section of the access track being within Flood Zones 2/3. The consultee responses note that there is a higher level of surface water flood risk to the west of the site area however this can be managed on site, so that the flood risk is not exacerbated locally. A detailed surface water management scheme is recommended as condition 7, which will be submitted to your officers for consideration prior to the commencement of development.

The Applicant had instructed a Landscape Assessment which concludes that the site is visually well contained and would not harm the character of the Dorset AONB. The proposed landscaping scheme will include substantial reinforcement and thickening of the existing field boundary and include improvements to the roadside setting, resulting in minor beneficial improvements. The detailing of this scheme and maintenance will be secured by recommended condition 3.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the site lies outside the defined development boundary of Beaminster (Local Plan Policy SUS2), the council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land and thus the policies for the supply of housing are considered to be out-of-date and the NPPF Paragraph 11d) is invoked. The site is considered to be a sustainable and suitable location for development, adjacent to the current settlement boundary, and close to the existing services which the town offers. The proposed 3bed dwelling of one and a half storeys is a modest proposal with larch boarding and brick detailing.

There have been no third-party objections to the proposal during the course of the application. The Applicant is keen to secure a well-designed permanent residence on the site, following a spate of burglaries and break-ins at the adjacent business to the

north (Fox Joinery), which is in the Applicants' ownership. It is anticipated that the natural surveillance from a dwelling in this location will significantly reduce the level of crime in the local area.

Thank you for your time Councillors. It is hoped that you can support your officers' recommendation and consideration of technical consultees on this proposal.

**WD/D/19/003186 - Homestead Farm, Main Street, Bothenhampton,
Bridport, DT6 4BJ**

Simon Brody

Firstly, thank you for allowing me to speak. I object to this application.

The original planning application in 2018 contained photomontages – as an aid to interpreting the formal drawings – which showed the existing buildings being re-built with additional wings down slope which were barely visible. Quite reasonably this was granted permission.

What was built, and which this current application purports to show is completely different. Buildings have not been rebuilt as before, the wings are 1.3m higher, are up to 3m closer to the road and materials used are alien to the Bothenhampton Conservation Area.

I carried out some rough surveys of the as built structure, and established the extent of the non-compliance. Having worked with your officers in the past, planners, conservationists, building control, engineers, highways, (public servants all) I felt very strongly that I would do all I could to make them aware of what appeared to be a flagrant breach of the original permission.

I engaged four consultants who proved the point, and they, very honourably, have produced damning reports which are included in my written submission.

These reports were made available to your officers, and it would be presumptuous to assume they had any great influence, but in October 2019, your officers concluded that the project, as built, did not enjoy the benefit of planning permission, and as a consequence any previously granted NMAs were invalid. A retrospective application would be required.

Does this current application have the same features as those shown in the original application - in particular the photomontages? No it does not. The pre-existing buildings have not been replicated, the wings are highly visible, the garage drive is dangerous, the materials of construction have no place in this conservation area, to name but a few transgressions. A number of listed properties in Main Street are now compromised, as indeed is your Council's own Conservation Report.

Had this application been presented in 2018 it would have been rejected out of hand. To grant permission now would be to endorse a witting breach of the original planning permission. I recommend that this committee rejects the current application.

Graham Styles

I object to the above application. The building is completely out of scale and sympathy with its surroundings, and has greatly damaged the centre of a historic village.

I welcome the Committee's scrutiny of this case, and appreciate the chance to comment.

This extremely large development is surrounded by listed buildings, and is in a conservation area in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In the original Design and Access Statement, on which planning approval in April 2018 was based, certain assurances were made; for example, that the building would respect the conservation area and would not impact existing views; that existing building materials would be re-used; and even that apple trees would be carefully re-located.

None of the assurances were respected. Our conservation area has been damaged by the sheer size and scale of the building; the materials used jar with the surroundings (hardly a single stone appears to have been re-used); and as for the poor apple trees, it seems they were "relocated" to the great orchard in the sky a long time ago.

Why give these assurances in the first place, I wonder?

Of even more concern is the fact - established through the persistence and money of local residents - that the building is substantially higher and closer to the road than it should be; and is thus all the more overbearing in relation to its surroundings. It's striking that even casual visitors to the village genuinely believe the building is a hotel.

Any application for alterations to listed buildings in the vicinity of Homestead Farm is rightly scrutinised, and rejected if it doesn't comply with the regulations. It would be wholly inconsistent and unfair, therefore, to permit such glaring departures from the agreed scheme in this case, given the damage caused to the area.

To do so would also be inconsistent with the relevant local plans, given the weight these attach to enhancing and preserving the local environment.

I very much hope therefore that the Committee will reject the application.

Sarah Butcher

I am writing to express my objections to the development at Homestead Farm (WD/D/19/003186) before the coming planning meeting on August 13th.

You will be aware that there is strong feeling against this development. I wish to stress that this is not simply a reflection of retrograde nimbyism: this is a hugely substantial and dominant site in the centre of an historic village. Any building constructed risked altering the character of its surroundings. Had the building been constructed in adherence with the plans, this building would have been sympathetic and the impact mitigated. Instead, the building is far more intrusive than planners condoned and is to the considerable detriment of historic Bothenhampton.

When taking the many infringements into account, including -most significantly - buildings well over 1m higher than planned and 3m closer to the road than permitted, councillors should know that this is not an ordinary development. This is no average residential building for family occupation: it is a £4m development (according to the website of Hart Design and Construction, which constructed the building) on a 5,000 square metre site.

It is a hugely significant development for Bridport, let alone Bothenhampton. Given its pivotal village centre location it should have been constructed as sensitively as possible.

Instead, we have a situation where the historic centre of a village, changed very little for hundreds of years, has suddenly been altered overnight by a construction resembling a municipal leisure centre. It's not just residents who object: visitors to the village are aghast and stop to gape.

The excessive height of the construction combined with its proximity to the road, both of which contravene stipulations made in the original planning permission to ensure the building blended into its surroundings, have made this building substantially different to that originally envisaged by the council.

The architects and the owners were made aware of villagers' realisation that the construction of Homestead Farm contravened the plans as early as February 2019. So too was Dorset Council's planning enforcement team. However, villagers' complaints were initially dismissed by all three parties and it was only after the village employed its own team of architects and planning consultants at some expense that the architects finally conceded that the building did not adhere to the plans.

Having finally made this admission, the subsequent argument of the architects and owners has been that the changes are so negligible as to be immaterial. This is absolutely not the case. With a building of this size, in a location of this sensitivity, the changes have entirely altered the landscape and will damage Bothenhampton in perpetuity unless rectified.

Pat Brody

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. In support of my letter dated 19th February 2020 I wish to stress the following in objection:

In this current submission there is a drawing 1702L 004 Rev A which is listed "As Approved". That drawing shows the proposed ridge height of the Clay Roof part of the Farmhouse at the same level as the pre-existing Farmhouse ridge. The surveyed level of the Farmhouse ridge was on a survey drawing supplied by the Applicant as 31.97 AOD. Therefore in accordance with that "Approved" drawing the proposed ridge height for the Farmhouse is the same level ie 31.97 AOD. This drawing is indeed an Approved Drawing under the terms of the original Planning Permission. It was also submitted under application WD/D/19/000355/NMA which the Planning Officer advises in his report was Approved.

However in contradiction, in the Design, Access and Planning Statement for this current application there is a table of levels, which your Planning Officer has accepted, and commented on. This shows the Farmhouse approved ridge level at 32.472. This demonstrates that the table of levels, which your Officer has relied upon for comment, is actually grossly in error.

As a Committee you need to ask yourselves are you prepared to endorse gross inaccuracies submitted as part of the application. I would venture to suggest that you would not wish to do this and therefore you should reject this application.

Jane Paterson

Many years ago I was a Community Nurse/Midwife in Dorset. Bothenhampton was on my Patch. Many an hour was spent visiting folk on the high pavement, from which we could gaze across the valley with uninterrupted views over a quintessentially English landscape towards the sea.

I am appalled that such a blot on this village, which is a unique example of what we are good at preserving in England, has been allowed. Natural Forest Marble dwellings, mingling along meandering lines throughout the village have been spoiled by this ugly edifice which is out of place in a Conservation area. That the Masonry alteration on Main Street alone has drawn 'No Comment' from the very organisations that serve to preserve our Heritage, is both concerning and perplexing.

I like many others who object to this dwelling, am passionate about keeping our country special. England is the envy of the world for our quaint and beautiful villages. New housing of grand design is of course a novel concept, but totally unsuitable in this place. What set out to be an 'Eco' house has probably produced enough carbon in the making thereof, to make that claim a joke.

I have noted the trajectory (I can't call it progress) of this application, with both interest and sadness. Change after change under the guise of Non Material Amendment, has seemingly been allowed to sail through, it would seem with simply a nod. Heights have been drastically changed, the driveway access to the property from Main Street is dangerous and one doesn't have to be a Highways engineer to work that out. To argue that point is an insult to anyone's intelligence.

The removal of so much hedge in Duck street is a travesty. In a Conservation Area such as Bothenhampton, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990, permission should be sought for this. It is mandatory for the local authority to be notified *six weeks in advance* of work being carried out, so that the authority can consider whether or not to impose a tree preservation order. It is a criminal offence to undertake work in a Conservation Area without consent, and as I understand it, the local planning authority can insist that the work is reversed. I cannot find evidence of consent having been given, and since hedges are but small trees, permission should have been obtained before the hedge was ripped out. Putting in a pond and a bog garden is probably not going to stop flooding.

Over 40 residents, many of whom have lived in the village for decades, are distraught at losing their views and their dark skies. I join them in voicing my strong opposition.

Brian Cattell

The original Planning Application for these works were revised to apply size reduction and height reduction and also specific materials in keeping with the village Conservation Area.

The Applicant has deliberately presented vague drawings and information, which should never have been accepted by Planning Dept for a development of this size in such a prominent location, and had successfully conned Dorset Planning Dept. to agree with NMA's These were later rightfully rejected!

This whole development has been an exercise in blindsiding the Planners who who have taken no notice of their own Conservation Area, ANOB Area and Local Plan regulations and requirements.

The report from Darren Rogers (I question if he has ever visited the site) does not go any way to addressing the problems and effort put in by residents to get this building built to Planning requirements and Planners to implement their own regulations. He does point out the fact that there are over 40 objections listed against this Application - please read and note! After all - what is the Planning Dept. for. Going on this Application it is not fit for purpose and a waste of Council Tax Payers money

This is a 4 bedroom - £4,000,000 development which is way out of keeping with the locale and Local Plan, and as built Totally out of character with the Conservation Village.

I fear the Planning Dept. was duped by the Eco-friendly "low carbon" quote in the Application!

There is no Environmental/ecological conservation in stripping out over 15 metres of existing historic hedgerow to create an access to the "Agricultural area" , over a private road which there is no proven authority to use, when access is perfectly feasible through the site (as is being used by the applicant and all contractors at present and during the last 2&1/2 years of construction). Or stripping out all existing Flora and fauna and raising levels by some 2 mtrs (is planning permission needed to raise levels?),and putting up innumerable sheds, housings and structures on same area.

The amendments to the **original** Planning are NOT "minor"

Enforce the **original** Planning or Demolish!

David Pencheon

You will have no shortage of reading with respect to the Homestead Farm debacle in Bothenhampton (WD/D/19/003186) so I will be as succinct as I can in highlighting the most obvious, the most important and the most factual discrepancies and inaccuracies within the report due to be presented on Wednesday.

I simply cannot understand why is the planning officer's report that is understating the height increases *that the applicants have already admitted to exceeding by much more*. Not 0.04m for the 'old barn' or 0.68m for 'bedroom cottage' but, according to the independent architect's report a height excess of this building at over 1.3m.

You will have read about a whole series of contraventions that the applicant is responsible for that, when looked at together have made a mockery of the planning process, even more so considering this is a sensitive conservation area.

It beggars belief that an enormous £4m building which now dominates the centre of this historic village could ever be described as a family home – I don't know how many visitors to the village have stopped and asked me if it is an hotel or a sports centre? It is grotesquely incongruous the listed buildings it now dominates.

Any reasonable person is bound to ask that, if the height and other contraventions to the original plans are now considered insignificant, what then will Dorset Council say to other planning infringements in less sensitive sites? Are we to believe that a 1 metre height difference is now an acceptable variation in semi completed structures? Can we now expect that any variations in a near completed built structure can be forgiven on the grounds that the initial drawing was only really an approximation anyway?

I am afraid that if these plans proceed, then it will be clear that there is a failure of due process at every level and at every stage of this planning that has so blighted this part of Bridport. As anyone got the courage to stand up and formally scrutinise this bulldozing of proper procedures?

Fortunately, this Wednesday offers a last chance for the planning committee to put matters right, draw a line in the sand, and uphold the probity and governance that citizens have a right to expect.

Bothenhampton and Walditch Parish Council

Bothenhampton and Walditch Parish Council objects strongly to this current development.

The original, agreed plans have not been respected; on the contrary, there have been very significant divergences. Independent surveys commissioned by local residents have shown that the building is over one metre too high; and that the two wings are up to three metres closer to Main Street than they should be, and thus all the more intrusive. Nor is the building composed of local materials.

In every respect, therefore, it is overbearing and unsympathetic in relation to the surrounding buildings and its setting.

The sensitive location of this exceptionally large development, in a conservation area surrounded by listed buildings, would demand stringent compliance with the agreed, original planning application. Unfortunately, this has not happened.

The development has not only damaged the centre of a historic village, to the consternation of many local residents, but it is also surely contrary to the relevant provisions of local plans and the importance these attach to conserving and enhancing the local environment.

The Parish Council therefore trusts the Committee will reject the current application.

Andy Partridge (Agent)

As this application was made under Section 73, the original planning permission remains unaffected by today's decision. The original planning permission (and approved alterations) is *the* baseline by which to assess the proposal. It is essentially the fall-back position.

The as-approved dwelling is a substantial, complex house (consisting of multiple and angled façades of differing heights) set in a large plot. The changes to the design should be considered in this planning context.

The modifications, including increases and decreases in the dimensions of the elements making up the building, and the change to the angle of the southwest wing, are slight. This is confirmed by your conservation officer who has stated that the changes are minor in nature. There is also some local support for the changes.

Looking at the design changes, no two views are the same. Views across the valley were partly contained pre-development. The as-built scheme also contains views across the valley.

Thus, the changes to the heights of Winter Garden, Dairy Barn and Bedroom Cottage elements do not make any appreciable difference, while the shortening of Dairy Barn, Bedroom Cottage and the Farmhouse compensates for any small loss of view above the buildings. When viewed from the far side of the valley changes are imperceptible. Also, the cranking of the southwest wing by 2 degrees is unnoticeable.

The evidence from the experts is clear. In considering the impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings and, by extension the AONB, there have been no adverse comments from Historic England, Natural England, Highways (to any element of the scheme) or the Conservation Officer.

The Officer's Report identifies no impact on neighbours' amenity in terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, particularly bearing in mind that the dwelling is sited centrally in its plot and the very large gaps between the properties that border it.

By relocating the entrance of Duck Street by 175cm south, it avoids utility services and is again a minor change.

The improvement to the ecological credentials of this low carbon house now including a pond will improve biodiversity and is endorsed by policy of the Dorset Natural Environment Team.

If in the event committee are minded to refuse the application, we would request a COVID secure site visit.

We ask you to follow the expert evidence and approve this application.

**WD/D/20/000253 - Beach Chalet adjacent car park, Charmouth
Beach, Lower Sea Lane, Charmouth**

Charmouth Parish Council

The Parish Council objects to this application as it is felt that the original approval in 2013 is adequate and it would not want to see the conditions relaxed any further.