

Application Number:	P/FUL/2026/04149
Webpage:	Planning application: P/FUL/2026/04149 - dorsetforyou.com
Site address:	Allendale House Hanham Road Wimborne Minster BH21 1AS
Proposal:	Install two handrails to main entrance steps. External and internal improvements
Applicant name:	Dorset Council
Case Officer:	Ellie Lee
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Bartlett and Cllr Morgan

1. Reason application is going to committee:

This application come before the planning committee because the building, Allendale House, is owned by Dorset Council.

2. Summary of recommendation:

To grant planning permission subject to conditions as set out at the end of this report.

3. Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Acceptable, within development boundary of Wimborne
Design, Character and Heritage Impacts	Harm to the Grade II listed building assessed as moderate, outweighed by public benefits. No harm to the Wimborne Minster Conservation Area.
Accessibility, Community Benefits and Public Safety	Acceptable
Flood risk and drainage	Acceptable
Highway impacts, safety, access and parking	Acceptable, proposal does not present a material harm to the transport network or highway safety.
Biodiversity	Acceptable

4. Description of site

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- 4.1 The application site comprises Allendale House which is a Grade II listed building located on Hanham Road, Wimborne Minster and falls within the Wimborne Minster Conservation Area. The building was constructed in 1823 to the designs of Sir Jeffry Wyattville and is an example of late Georgian architecture.
- 4.2 The principal elevation features a prominent portico with Doric columns and stone entrance steps, and the building is currently occupied by East Dorset Heritage Trust, Wimborne BID and Citizens Advice East Dorset and Purbeck and is used for a range of community, educational, office and event functions.
- 4.3 An associated community centre building known as the Allendale Community Centre is located to the east of the Grade II listed building.
- 4.4 The application site is located within the built-up area of Wimborne Minster and is surrounded by a mix of listed and non-listed buildings.
- 4.5 The proposed works relate to the principal elevation and a limited number of internal and external features of the building. The principal entrance is approached via a set of stone flagstone steps beneath a portico supported by Doric columns.
- 4.6 At present there are no handrails to the entrance steps on the principal elevation, and existing lighting is provided beneath the portico soffit. Internally, the rear corridor currently has a modern vinyl floor covering, together with a central stairwell that is served by a rooflight with timber glazing bars.

5. Description of development

- 5.1. The proposed handrails are to be positioned on either side of the principal entrance steps on the west elevation and comprise black-painted galvanised steel handrails fixed to the stone steps using reversible fixings. The tactile studs are to be installed to the flagstone steps to assist visually impaired users and improve accessibility to the building.
- 5.2. The existing light fitting beneath the entrance portico is proposed to be replaced with a single ceiling-mounted luminaire using the existing fixing location and electrical supply.
- 5.3. In addition, a new sign indicating the accessible entrance is proposed on an external rendered wall, whilst the existing vinyl flooring within the rear corridor is proposed to be replaced with a more neutral and sympathetic floor finish.
- 5.4. Maintenance works are also proposed to the existing building fabric and comprise the repointing of the flagstone entrance steps and the preparation, repair and redecoration of the timber beading to the rooflight serving the central stairwell, including limited like-for-like replacement of deteriorated sections where necessary.

6. Background and relevant planning history

This is a dual application submitted alongside Listed Building Consent application ref. P/LBC/2026/04150, which seeks consent for the same works to the listed building.

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Previously to the applications under consideration, permission was granted under applications P/LBC/2025/01488 and P/FUL/2025/01489 on 04/06/2025 for the following:

‘Installation of electric bollards to car park. Electric supply from Allendale House to Bollards. Rebuild Wall.’

In addition, a non-material amendment application P/NMA/2026/03363 was granted for the following changes to original planning permission P/FUL/2025/01489 on 24/07/2026:

‘Non material amendment to planning permission P/FUL/2025/01489 to revise proposed bollards to the same with LED capping for increased visibility and reinstatement of extra section of walling.’

Specialist pre-application advice was provided by the Conservation Officer only, on 28/04/2025 (under application P/PAP/2025/00163) for proposed handrails to the front entrance, and the officer level advice set out that the principle of a single handrail was supported to improve safety, with clear and convincing justification required for multiple handrails; improvements to lighting, step nosing and signage were also recommended.

There is also other planning history available that relates to the site, although this is not considered directly relevant to the assessment of the current proposal:

Application No.	Description	Decision	Date
03/02/0823/LBC & 03/02/0824/ADV	Projecting sign	Granted	28/08/2002
03/00/0135/FUL	Refurbishment & conversion for use as community learning centre including lift installation. Amended plan rec'd 18/08/00	Granted	10/11/2000
03/00/0136/LBC	Refurbishment & conversion for use as community learning centre including lift installation. Listed building app amended plan 18/08/00	Granted	24/10/2000
03/78/2706	Change of use from offices to retail showrooms for antiques	Granted	09/03/1979

7. List of constraints

Grade II Listed Building - List Entry: 1119570

Within the Wimborne Minster Conservation Area

Within the Settlement Boundary of Wimborne/Colehill

Within Environment agency Flood Zone 2

Within a Groundwater zone – Susceptibility to flooding

8. Consultations

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

Consultees

1. Historic England

No comments received. Summary of the comments on related listed building application read:

- Handrails would cause some harm but are considered capable of justification due to the public benefit of improved access.
- Concerns were raised regarding the proposed anti-slip studs and Historic England recommended that less intrusive alternatives be explored.
- A more sympathetic or discreet light fitting would be preferred.
- Further information was requested regarding the replacement floor covering and any surviving historic floor beneath.
- The proposed sign was considered to have a neutral impact on the listed building

2. Dorset Council Conservation Officer

On balance the revised proposal will result in a moderate degree of harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and affect the design of the porticoed entrance and fabric. However, the perceived degree of harm to special interest has been clearly and convincingly justified and public benefits identified including safe and inclusive access which will help secure the continued public use of the building outweighs the harm in this instance. The revised proposal can be supported.

3. Dorset Council Highways

The proposed works relate to access point that is away from the public highway, and therefore not expected to have any impact on the public highway.

The Highway Authority therefore has NO OBJECTION to the proposal.

4. Dorset Council Tree Officer

- No trees affected by proposed alterations.

5. Dorset Council – Assets & Property

No comments received

6. Dorset Council – Building Control

No comments received

7. Wimborne Minster Town Council

No objection

8. Wimborne Minster Ward Members

No comments received

Representations received

The application was advertised by Site Notices.

No neighbour representations have been received.

9. 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 when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, there is a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

10. Relevant policies

Development plan

In this case the development plan comprises:

Adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan:

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

KS1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

KS2: Settlement hierarchy

HE1: Valuing and conserving our historic environment

HE2: Design of new development

ME6: Flood management, mitigation and defence

Made Neighbourhood Plans

N/A

Material considerations

Emerging local plans:

Policy DM4: Emerging development plan proposals 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

The emerging Dorset Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with plan-making processes set out in the Levelling Up and Regenerating Act 2023 and Local Planning Regulations (2026). As the plan is still at an early stage of the plan making process, limited weight can be attached to it when taking decisions on planning applications. Decisions on planning applications should continue to be assessed against the policies in adopted development plans, national planning policy and any other relevant material considerations.

Emerging neighbourhood plans

Wimborne Minster Neighbourhood Plan- In preparation – limited weight applied to decision making

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies local priorities for nature recovery and maps areas where action would be most beneficial. In planning decisions it is a material consideration, helping to ensure that development supports biodiversity enhancement and aligns with Dorset's agreed priorities for nature recovery.

National Planning Policy Framework (17 August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 17 August 2026, sets out the Government's national planning policies for both plan-making and decision-making in England.

When determining development proposals decision-makers are required to take a positive and proactive approach and to seek to approve sustainable development where possible.

The NPPF introduces a permanent presumption in favour of sustainable development, through Policies S3 to S5 (which replaces the former "tilted balance" contained in paragraph 11 of the previous NPPF) and sets out the principles for development within and outside settlements. The Framework also confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Other relevant NPPF chapters and policies include:

- Chapter 3: Decision making policies. Local planning authorities should approach decision making positively, proactively and proportionately. They should work with applicants through pre-application engagement and consultations and aim to resolve concerns through planning conditions or obligations where possible to avoid delay and to enable an approval rather than a refusal. Applications that accord with the development plan, the NPPF and other material considerations should not be refused where they can clearly be approved.
 - DM3 Determining development proposals
 - DM6 Use of planning conditions and obligations

- Chapter 4: Achieving Sustainable Development. The objective of the policies in this chapter is to meet development needs through sustainable patterns of development, including by maximising the potential for growth on suitable land within settlements, enabling development which will support the rural economy, rural communities and the provision of infrastructure, and limiting development away from settlements to help safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
 - S3 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - S4 Principle of development within settlements
- Chapter 12: Making effective use of land. Planning decisions should give substantial weight to proposals that make more effective use of land and buildings, while maintaining good design, living conditions and local character. This includes redevelopment of previously developed, vacant, underused, contaminated or derelict sites, reuse of existing buildings, creation of additional homes through sensitive infill, upward extensions and development within existing plots. Higher-density development is also promoted within settlements in well-connected locations near public transport. Development that fails to make efficient use of land in accordance with the policy should be refused.
 - L2 Making effective use of land
- Chapter 14: Achieving well-designed places. Development should be high quality, respect and enhance local character, deliver sustainable and attractive places, and accord with relevant design policies. Proposals that demonstrate good design and place-making should be supported, while those that fail to meet established design standards should be refused unless clearly justified.
 - DP3 Key principles for well-designed places
 - DP4 The design process
- Chapter 16: Promoting healthy communities. The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places and support the provision of appropriate public services, by enabling development which can support this aim and seeking to retain, improve and deliver new facilities which are important for community wellbeing and minimising inequalities.
 - HC4 Proposals for new and improved community facilities, public service infrastructure and development providing public health benefits
- Chapter 17: Pollution, public protection and security. The objective of the policies in this chapter is to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account risks posed by pollution and other hazards; that any impacts which development might have are taken into account; and that sufficient provision is made for development required for public safety and security.
 - P5 Maintaining public safety and security
- Chapter 18: Managing flood risk and coastal change. Development proposals should minimise risks to development arising from all sources of flooding and coastal change, taking into account the impacts of climate change, by steering development away from areas of risk, ensuring that development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and incorporating sustainable drainage systems where appropriate.
 - F4 Assessing flood risk for decision-making
 - F6 Development in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea

- Chapter 19: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: Development should conserve and enhance the natural environment by protecting important landscapes, habitats, biodiversity and trees, while maximising opportunities for nature recovery, green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain. Proposals should avoid significant environmental harm, prioritise land of lower environmental value where possible, and be sensitively designed in protected landscapes and coastal areas. Development causing unacceptable impacts on designated sites, irreplaceable habitats or biodiversity that cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated for should be refused.
 - In National Landscapes substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing their natural beauty.
 - Decisions in Heritage Coast areas should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation
 - Improving the natural environment biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.
- N2 Improving the natural environment
- Chapter 20: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – Great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Development that preserves or enhances designated or non-designated heritage assets should be approved. while any harm must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Proposals causing substantial harm to, or loss of, heritage assets should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where overriding public benefits outweigh the harm.
 - HE4 Securing the conservation of heritage assets
 - HE5 Assessing effects on heritage assets
 - HE6 Proposals affecting designated heritage assets
 - HE9 Conservation areas

Other material considerations:

National Planning Practice Guidance

Including 'Determining a planning application'

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 Supplementary Planning Document

Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy 2020-2025

Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction. December 2023.

Dorset Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study Update March 2026

SPG15 Wimborne Minster Conservation Area

11. 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. 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.

It is considered that the proposed development would not disadvantage persons with protected characteristics and would improve accessibility for those with certain physical disabilities.

13. Planning Assessment

Principle of development:

- 13.1. The application site is located within the main urban area of Wimborne Minster where local planning policy KS2 (Settlement Hierarchy) allows development, subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies. This policy is consistent with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policy S4 which identifies that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

Design, Character and Heritage Impacts:

- 13.2. Local planning policy HE1 (Valuing and Conserving our Historic Environment) requires that heritage assets should be protected and enhanced. Local planning policy HE2 (Design of New Development) requires that development should be compatible with its surroundings in relation to 11 criteria including materials and visual impact. These objectives are reflected within NPPF policies DP3 (Key principles for well-designed places) and DP4 (The design process) relating to well-designed places, and NPPF policies HE4 (Securing the conservation of heritage assets), HE5 (Assessing effects on heritage assets), HE6 (Proposals affecting designated heritage assets) and HE9 (Conservation areas) relating to the conservation of heritage assets and Conservation Areas.
- 13.3. Allendale House, a late Georgian Grade II listed building, located near the town centre of Wimborne within the Wimborne Minster Conservation Area, is adjacent to Allendale Community Centre and its car park, which was developed on what were once the

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house's pleasure grounds extending to the river as noted within the Conservation Area Appraisal.

- 13.4. The application proposes a series of access and maintenance works including the installation of handrails to the principal entrance steps, tactile studs, replacement lighting, accessibility signage, repointing of the entrance steps and maintenance works to the rooflight serving the central stairwell.
- 13.5. The Council's Conservation Officer and Historic England have noted that the installation of the two handrails would result in moderate degree of harm to the historic design and proportions of front entrance as well as some damage to fabric to enable secure fitting of the posts.
- 13.6. Amended plans and additional supporting information have been provided following consultation with the Conservation Officer. The amendments include a reduction in the extent of the tactile studs from three rows to a single row on each step nosing, revised handrail detailing incorporating inward returned ends, and further information regarding the reversibility of the proposed works and associated fixing methods.
- 13.7. The applicant has also provided additional justification for the positioning and design of the handrails, highlighting the need to maintain the visual openness and symmetry of the principal elevation whilst improving accessibility. Furthermore, additional information has been submitted confirming that the proposed replacement vinyl flooring can be installed using methods that avoid damage to the underlying floor structure and allow for future removal without harm to the building fabric.
- 13.8. It is recognised that the proposed works have been designed to improve accessibility and safety whilst limiting intervention into the historic fabric of the building. The handrails are modest in scale, utilise a limited number of reversible fixings and have been designed with a simple appearance. The proposed tactile studs, replacement lighting and accessibility signage are similarly limited interventions that would not dominate the appearance of the principal elevation. The Council's Conservation Officer has noted that the design of the new lighting unit appears more discrete in terms of size and finish than the existing unit.
- 13.9. The proposed repairs to the entrance steps and rooflight represent appropriate maintenance works which would contribute to the ongoing preservation of the Grade II listed building. The existing floor construction is not of historic interest.
- 13.10. As such, the amended scheme demonstrates an approach based upon the principles of minimum intervention, reversibility and like-for-like repair where practicable.
- 13.11. Having due consideration to policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Chapter 20 of the NPPF it is judged that the benefits of the scheme in providing safe and inclusive access to the building which is in public use are important public benefits enabling the long-term continued public use of the building. Final details of the proposed materials would be secured by condition on the listed building application so do not need to be duplicated here.
- 13.12. Notwithstanding the amendments and measures identified above which reduce the impact of the works, it is considered that the installation of the two handrails would result in a moderate degree of harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building. The moderate harm would arise from the introduction of the two handrails which would alter the historic design and proportions of the formal porticoed

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entrance, together with the physical intervention into the historic fabric required to securely fix the posts into the entrance steps.

- 13.13. In respect of the Wimborne Minster Conservation Area, given the limited scale and nature of the proposed works, officers consider that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance and no harm to the Conservation Area has been identified.
- 13.14. Having given significant weight to the moderate harm that has been identified to the listed building, it is considered that the public benefits identified above, outweigh that identified harm.
- 13.15. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with local planning policies HE1 and HE2 and with NPPF policies DP3, DP4, HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9.

Accessibility, Community Benefits and Public Safety:

- 13.16. The building is used for a range of community purposes and is occupied by East Dorset Heritage Trust, Wimborne BID and Citizens Advice East Dorset and Purbeck.
- 13.17. The proposed handrails to the principal elevation steps, together with the tactile studs, replacement lighting and improved signage, would enhance accessibility and safety for visitors.
- 13.18. The proposal would therefore support the continued operation of an important community facility and deliver public benefits through improved accessibility and safety. In this regard, the proposal accords with local planning policies and NPPF policy HC4 (Proposals for new and improved community facilities, public service infrastructure and development providing public health benefits), together with the objectives of NPPF policy P5 (Maintaining public safety and security).

Flood Risk:

- 13.19. The application site lies within Flood Zone 2 and the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has identified that the site lies within an area that is susceptible to groundwater emergence flooding.
- 13.20. Given the nature of the scheme, it is not considered that the development would increase flood risk or increase the vulnerability of the existing use. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of local planning policy ME6 and NPPF policies F4 and F6 with regard to flood risk.

Highway impacts, safety, access and parking

- 13.21. The proposed works do not affect existing vehicular access arrangements, parking provision or the operation of the public highway. Dorset Council Highways has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection, advising that the works are located away from the public highway and are not expected to result in any highway impacts.
- 13.22. The proposal is therefore acceptable in highway safety and access terms.

Biodiversity

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- 13.23. The application has claimed the de minimis exemption from the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. This exemption is accepted as the proposed development falls below the de minimis threshold and meets the relevant criteria. The de minimis threshold applies to development which:
- i) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
 - ii) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).
- 13.24. The proposal will not require alterations to the existing roof of the building. Due to the scale and nature of the development no ecological assessment has been required. Furthermore, the Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that no trees would be affected by the proposed alterations and has raised no objections.
- 13.25. Given the scale and nature of the development, together with the absence of impacts on habitats, trees or protected species, the proposal is considered to accord with local planning policy ME6 and NPPF policy N2.

Environmental implications

- 13.26. The minor works will have no significant environmental impacts.

14. Summary of issues and the planning balance

For the reasons set out above, the moderate harm to the Grade II listed building is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme in delivering accessibility, safety and maintenance benefits to an important community facility.

The application is therefore considered to accord with the development plan and there are no material considerations indicating that planning permission should be refused.

15. Recommendation: Grant 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

15122/02 Proposed Ground, First & Second Floor Plans

15122/03 B Proposed Alterations to Porch / Entrance

15122/04 B Existing and Proposed West and (Partial) North Elevations

15122/05 Site and Location Plans

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

Informative Notes:

1. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework

In accordance with policy DM3 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 applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.

2. This permission should be read in conjunction with the associated Listed Building consent reference number P/LBC/2026/04150 and its attached conditions.