

Application Details	
Application Reference Number:	12/25/0013
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Earliest decision date:	03 February 2026
Expiry Date	18 February 2026
Extension of time	30 June 2026
Decision Level	Chair/Vice Chair Referral
Description:	Change of use of public house and beer store into 3 No. dwellings with associated landscaping and car parking and demolition of outbuildings and skittle alley at The White Hart Inn, Pitminster Road, Corfe
Site Address:	THE WHITE HART INN, PITMINSTER ROAD, CORFE, TAUNTON, TA3 7BU
Parish:	12
Conservation Area:	No
Somerset Levels and Moors RAMSAR Catchment Area:	Yes
National Landscape (AONB):	Blackdown Hills
Case Officer:	Mr G Clifford
Agent:	
Applicant:	CORFE ESTATES LTD
Committee Date:	
Reason for reporting application to Committee	N/A

1. Recommendation

1.1 Conditional Approval

2. Executive Summary of key reasons for recommendation

2.1 The proposed conversion of the public house to residential use is considered policy compliant and acceptable as it has been demonstrated that the business is not viable and has had no takers when marketed and put to public auction.

3. Planning Obligations and conditions and informatives

3.1 Conditions (full text in appendix 1)

Time limit

Approved plans

Materials

Timber windows recessed

Biodiversity enhancement
Parking/turning
Surface water
Water consumption
Allocation certificate

3.2 Informatives (bullet point only) _

3.2.1 Proactive Statement

3.3 Obligations

None

4. Proposed development, site and surroundings

4.1 Details of proposal

The proposal is a revised submission for a scheme to convert the public house to 3 dwellings, including one in an outbuilding and the demolition of the skittle alley. The application is accompanied by a viability statement, marketing and accounts information, a Design statement, Transport statement, roost assessment and a shadow HRA. The land to the rear with the skittle alley has since been sold by the applicant.

4.2 Sites and surroundings _

The site lies within the village of Corfe adjacent to the road junction to Pitminster and consists of a rendered and stone two storey public house with a detached store to the west and a single storey skittle alley to the rear projecting into the car park to the south. Dwellings lie to the east and west in the National Landscape area.

5. Planning (and enforcement) history

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
12/24/0003	Change of use of public house and beer store to 3 No. dwellings with demolition of outbuilding and skittle alley and erection of 2 No. dwellings with associated landscaping and car parking at The White Hart, Pitminster Road, Corfe	RF	9/5/2024
12/24/0004	Change of use and extension of public house, beer store and skittle alley into 10 bedroom inn for holiday let use at The White Hart, Pitminster Road, Corfe	RF	10/5/2024
12/25/0003	Change of use of public house and beer store to 3 No. dwellings with demolition of outbuilding and skittle alley and erection of 2 No. dwellings with associated landscaping and car parking at The White Hart, Pitminster Road, Corfe	WD	22/5/2025
12/25/0009	Change of use of public house and beer	RF	28/11/2025

	store to 3 No. dwellings with demolition of outbuilding and skittle alley and erection of 2 No. dwellings with associated landscaping and car parking at The White Hart, Pitminster Road, Corfe		
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6. Environmental Impact Assessment

Not required

7. Habitats Regulations Assessment

As the competent authority, the Local Planning Authority is required by Regulation 63(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the development in view of the Ramsar site's conservation objectives. The LPA may only to agree to the proposal after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Ramsar site.

A phosphate mitigation strategy has been submitted by the applicant which proposes that third party credits from a recognised provider will be purchased to secure suitable mitigation.

The LPA has consulted with Natural England on the proposed mitigation strategy and their comments are summarised above. The LPA must have regard to these consultation responses in carrying out the Appropriate Assessment (Regulation 63(3)). In summary, Natural England has reviewed the applicants mitigation proposals and is satisfied with the approach and conclusions. It is concluded through the Habitat Regulations Assessment that the Appropriate Assessment is passed.

Subject to securing the implementation and maintenance of the mitigation strategy through planning conditions, it is considered that the proposed development will not adversely effect on the integrity of the Ramsar Site (Regulation 63(5))."

8. Consultation and Representations

Statutory consultees (the submitted comments are available in full on the Council's website).

8.1 Date of consultation: 06 January 2026

8.2 Date of revised consultation (if applicable):

8.3 Press Date:

8.4 Site Notice Date: N/a

8.5 **Consultees** the following were consulted:

Consultee	Comment	Officer Comment
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CORFE PARISH COUNCIL	Object agree with villagers request refusal	10.1.1
SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP	No objection with conditions re parking, surface water and construction management plan	10.1.5
SCC - RIGHTS OF WAY	No comments	
SCC - ECOLOGY	Negligible effect recommend condition regarding enhancement measures prior to occupation.	10.1.9
WESSEX WATER	The developer will need to agree protection measures for any apparatus crossing the site. Surface water must be disposed of via the SuDS hierarchy subject to Building Regs.	Noted
BLACKDOWN HILLS AONB SERVICE	Concern over good site planning and the area not included a concern given limited amenity space.	10.1.3
SOMERSET WASTE PARTNERSHIP	No comments	
Nutrient Neutrality Officer	The development will increase phosphate loading and mitigation will be required to ensure nutrient neutrality.	10.1.9
LANDSCAPE	No comments	

8.6 Local representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent in accordance with the Councils Adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

10 letters have been received making the following comments (summarised):

Material Planning Considerations	
Objections (9)	Officer comment
Increased access, lack of facilities and still a need for a pub	10.1.1
Loss of community asset	10.1.1
	10.1.1

Pub inappropriately marketed	10.1.4
Housing not meet local needs and need of young.	
No demand for housing	
Parking access and amenity issues	10.1.5 & 10.1.7
Insufficient parking	10.1.5
No public transport	
Not comprehensive design with demolition of skittle alley	10.1.3
Right of way to houses would be obstructed	10.1.5
Concern over safety	10.1.5
Area subdivided to gardens not suitable	10.1.4
No community engagement	10.1.12
Loss of potential employment	
Wildlife impact	10.1.9
Contrary to policies DM1, DM2 & SD1	10.1.3 & 10.1.12
Impact on AONB	10.1.6
Pub not derelict but poorly maintained by current owner	
Should condition no further development, tidying up after demolition and blue land given to Parish for village	Land to rear has been sold and any further development would require planning permission.
No phosphate mitigation details	Details submitted and consulted on
Support	Officer comment
1 No objection	

Cllr Wakefield - Test for marketing pub not satisfied, more than 3 dwellings an overdevelopment, land to rear should be given to community, concern over access, insufficient amenity space and parking for visitors.

9. Relevant planning policies and Guidance

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended ("the 1990 Act), requires that in determining any planning applications regard is to be had to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as is material to the application and to any other material planning considerations Section 38(6) of the Planning and

Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ("the 2004 Act") requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations strongly indicate otherwise. The site lies in the former Taunton Deane area. The Development Plan comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) (2016), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015) and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

As a result of local government reorganisation Somerset Council was established on 1 April 2023 and the Council has started the preparation of a new local plan. The timetable for the plan is set out in an updated Local Development Scheme agreed in February 2025. The emerging Local Plan is not currently at a stage where any weight can be attached. However, where applicable up to date evidence based studies which have been completed to support the preparation of the Local Plan will be taken into account in decision making. These can be found on the Council's website

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/evidence-base-and-monitoring/>

Relevant policies of the development plan in the assessment of this application are listed below:

SD1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development,
SP1 - Sustainable development locations,
CP1 - Climate change,
CP3 - Town and other centres,
CP4 - Housing,
CP6 - Transport and accessibility,
CP8 - Environment,
DM1 - General requirements,
DM4 - Design,
DM5 - Use of resources and sustainable design,
A1 - Parking Requirements,
A5 - Accessibility of development,
C4 - Protection of community facilities,
D7 - Design quality,
D8 - Safety,
D10 - Dwelling Sizes,
D12 - Amenity space,
ENV1 - Protection of trees, woodland, orchards and hedgerows,
ENV2 - Tree planting within new developments,
I4 - Water infrastructure,

Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030

Policy PL16 - All development affecting the Blackdown Hills National Landscape should conserve and enhance natural beauty and special qualities by:

Respecting landscape character, settlement patterns and local character of the built environment

Being sensitively sited and of appropriate scale

Reinforcing local distinctiveness
Seeking to protect and enhance natural features and biodiversity

Supplementary Planning Documents

District Wide Design Guide, December 2021

Other relevant policy documents:

Somerset West and Taunton Council's Climate Positive Planning: Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency (March 2022).

Placemaking Principles for Somerset (October 2024)

The Council's Placemaking Principles were adopted in October 2024 following public consultation and are a material planning consideration. These principles set the Council's vision to create attractive, high quality environments that are inclusive and accessible for all. [Appendix 1- Finalised placemaking principles.pdf](#) The principles guide the Council's approach to transport and development planning, aiming to enhance the quality of life for residents by promoting active travel, reducing carbon footprints, and fostering community pride.

The 10 Principles are: -

- 1 *Reduce the need to travel via private car.*
- 2 *Facilitate modal shift through multi-modal travel measures.*
- 3 *Integrate car and bicycle parking in a way that prioritises pedestrians and public realm.*
- 4 *Create an attractive, high-quality environment, incorporating green infrastructure into streets and public spaces.*
- 5 *Improve road safety for all users through street design, appropriate to the context.*
- 6 *Facilitate car-free school transport*
- 7 *Enhance accessibility and attractiveness through materials, street furniture and fixtures.*
- 8 *Plan lighting, waste storage/collection and other service infrastructure at an early design stage.*
- 9 *Provide safe connectivity within rural communities.*
- 10 *Engage key stakeholders early*

Neighbourhood plans:

None

9.1 National Planning Policy Framework

10. Material Planning Considerations

The main planning issues relevant in the assessment of this application are as follows:

10.1.1 The principle of development

The site lies within the village of Corfe which is an identified village and under policy SP1 and within settlement boundaries, development of small scale proposals within settlement limits will be allowed. That said the development of the site has to be assessed against other policies of the development plan. Specifically the loss of a pub facility has to be considered in light of policies CP3 of the Core Strategy and C4 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP). CP3 states that proposals which would result in the loss of such services will not be permitted where this would damage the vitality and viability of a settlement or increase car travel by local residents, unless it can be independently proven to be unviable for re-use for local service provision. Policy C4 requires evidence to demonstrate no community need, the facility is no longer financially viable, or it could not be put to another community use. These requirements were set out in pre-application advice and clarification has been provided in terms of the financial losses of over £27,000 for the year ending November 2020 and no evidence of other companies trading profitably on the site to demonstrate viability. The site has been marketed by a public house specialist since May 2023 for over 17 months without success and was put to public auction in October 2024 but failed to receive suitable offers and the reserve of £150,000. This marketing is considered sufficient to demonstrate it is not a viable. No alternative community use has been put forward. There are 4 other pubs in a 5 mile radius and the Parish wish to see the pub retained rather than other community use. While there is clear local objection to the scheme there is considered to be evidence of non-viability to support an alternative use in line with policies and so the proposed conversion and loss of the public house as in the previous submission is therefore not objected to.

10.1.2 Heritage

The site lies outside of the conservation area and while not listed can be considered a non-designated heritage asset. The proposed conversion would see the retention and conversion of the main buildings on site which is acceptable in principle. The previously unacceptable new build dwellings have been deleted from the scheme. Conditions are proposed to ensure new walling and windows match the existing materials.

10.1.3 Design of the proposal

The conversion of the main pub and external store are considered to maintain the traditional character of these structures. The new build dwellings were previously objected to as they did not reflect the character of the adjacent properties and caused an adverse overbearing impact and a loss of amenity. These elements have

now been deleted from the scheme and therefore lessen the cramped appearance of the previous refusal. While it would be beneficial if the land to the rear were included in the scheme this has been sold separately and so is not available. The scheme as revised is considered compliant with policy DM1.

10.1.4 Quality of Accommodation

The conversion of the pub and outbuilding meet the space standards set out in policy D10 and also provide external amenity space in accordance with D12. Greater external space could be provided if the area to the rear were also included, however this has since been sold. Visitor parking has been provided as well as parking for the three units and access is also maintained to existing properties to the south. The development does not meet the trigger for affordable provision, however while not officially affordable as such, the proposal will provide 3 small scale units for occupation within the village.

10.1.5 Access, Highway Safety and Parking Provision

The proposed scheme sets out to provide 3 units of accommodation and indicates 8 parking spaces, including two visitor spaces. This level is considered appropriate and in line with policy A1 in light of the rural location and lack of local bus services. The proposal utilises the existing access to the highway which already has limited visibility due to the position of the buildings and the existing boundary hedge. It is not considered reasonable to object on this basis given the long standing use of the access by numerous vehicles that would have used the pub car park. This view is reflected by the Highway Authority comments who recommend conditions re parking, surface water and construction management plan. The latter two are not considered reasonable given the scale of the development and existing parking area use. The layout maintains adequate turning space and maintains the access through for the existing properties to the south.

10.1.6 The impact on the character and appearance of the locality

The proposed scheme re-uses the existing buildings on site, other than the skittle alley, and proposes materials to reflect the character of the area which is considered in keeping with the National Landscape character. The development is not therefore considered to adversely impact the National Landscape.

10.1.7 The impact on neighbouring residential amenity

The impact of the scheme as revised is considered acceptable in terms of amenity impact as the new build dwellings that resulted in an overbearing impact have been deleted from the proposal.

10.1.8 The impact on trees and landscaping

There is no significant vegetation on the existing site and the development would allow for new planting in both the front of the pub and the new courtyard. This could be conditioned and would satisfy the requirements of policy ENV2.

10.1.9 The impact on ecology and biodiversity and the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site.

The Ecologist is satisfied with the survey work carried out and does not consider there would be an adverse impact on protected species. A condition regarding biodiversity enhancement measures is recommended particularly as the site is

exempt from BNG. The development lies within the catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors where Natural England (NE) has precluded new development that has a phosphate impact to avoid further damage to the Ramsar site. A shadow HRA has been put forward as part of the submission demonstrating nutrient neutrality with the potential purchase of phosphate credits from a registered provider. Natural England has raised no objection to the HRA and any mitigation would need to be secured through a condition.

10.1.10 Waste/Recycling facilities

Provision for waste and recycling are provided partially within the properties as well as a walled external bin storage area being provided adjacent to the road.

10.1.11 Flood risk and energy efficiency

The site does not lie within a flood risk area and a condition to secure adequate disposal of surface water could be attached to any approval. The re-use of the existing buildings with improved insulation will enhance energy efficiency.

10.1.12 Any other matters

While an objection has been made on the basis of a lack of community engagement, this is not a reason to refuse the development. It has also been claimed that there is no need for housing. However it is not necessary to demonstrate need as the site lies within the settlement limit where redevelopment of any appropriate scale would be acceptable if compliant with other policies of the development plan. The site is in the village so policy DM2 does not apply and the site is considered sustainable. The scale of the new development does not hit the trigger for affordable housing. It is not considered that a residential use here would lead to increased noise and pollution over the approved development as a public house and disruption during construction is not considered a material impact to warrant refusal.

11 Local Finance Considerations

11.1 Community Infrastructure Levy

Creation of residential dwellings is CIL liable.

This proposed development measures approximately 300 sqm.

The application is for residential development outside the settlement limits of Taunton and Wellington where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is £125 per square metre. Based on current rates, the CIL receipt for this development is approximately £37,500.00. With index linking this increases to approximately £64,000.00.

12 Planning balance and conclusion

12.1 The general effect of paragraph 11 of the NPPF is that, in the absence of relevant or up-to-date development plan policies, the balance is tilted in favour of the grant of permission, except where the policies within the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a "*clear reason for refusing the development proposed*" or where the benefits of the proposed development are "*significantly and demonstrably*" outweighed by the adverse impacts when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. In this instance the development in converting the existing buildings within the village settlement limit would be in line with policies CP8 and DM1. While the development would result in the loss of the public house, it is considered it has been demonstrated the pub is not viable and has no purchasers following public auction and so would not be contrary to CP3 of the Core Strategy or C4 of the SADMP.

12.2 For the reasons set out above, having regard to all the matters raised, it is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Appendix 1 – Planning Conditions and Informatives

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

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

(A2) DrNo P-WH-102 Rev B BEER STORE CONVERSION PROPOSED PLANS & ELEVATIONS

(A3) DrNo P-WH-104 Rev B PROPOSED STREETSCENE

(A2) DrNo P-WH-SS-02 Rev C PROPOSED SITE CROSS SECTIONS

(A2) DrNo P-WH-100 Rev E PROPOSED SITE PLAN

(A2) DrNo P-WH-101 Rev B PROPOSED PLANS & ELEVATIONS

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

3. Prior to the construction of the boundary wall and gable, samples of the natural stone in the form of a sample panel to be constructed on site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained as such.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the building/area.

4. Any windows hereby permitted shall be recessed in the wall to match the existing windows recesses and shall be constructed in timber.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character of the building and any features of historic or architectural interest that it possesses.

5. The following shall be incorporated into the site proposal with photographs of the installed features submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation:

- a. It is recommended that site enhancement measures shall

include the installation of Eco Bat Boxes, Integrated Eco Bat Boxes or Bat Access Tiles on the new roof of the structure. These features should avoid any artificial lighting, with no modern breathable felt to be used around any bat access tiles.

- b. To enhance the site for nesting birds, a variety of bird boxes shall be installed around the site to enhance the nesting opportunities within the local landscape. These should be targeted for species within the area and ideally encapsulate as many species as feasibly possible.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework

6. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until space has been laid out, drained and surfaced within the site in accordance with the approved plan(s) for the parking and turning of vehicles, and such area(s) shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles associated with the development.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate space within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles clear of the highway, in the interests of highway safety.

7. Details of the proposed treatment of surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the new dwellings.

Reason: In the interests of preventing the risk of flooding.

8. No individual dwelling hereby approved shall be occupied until the optional requirement for potential consumption of wholesome water by persons occupying that dwelling in Part G of Schedule 1 and Regulation 36 of the Building Regulations 2010 of 110 litres per person per day has been complied with.

Reason: To improve the sustainability of the dwellings in accordance with the Taunton Deane: Core Strategy Policies DM5 (the Supplemental Planning Document – Districtwide Design Guide) and Paragraphs 134, 154 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Sept 2023).

9. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until an Allocation Certificate has been submitted to and approved in writing by the

Local Planning Authority which addresses the additional nutrient input arising from the development within the fluvial catchment area upstream of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site and on the same hydrological pathway.

The Allocation Certificate shall be a written certificate issued by the phosphate credit provider confirming the allocation of the full phosphate credit requirement generated by the development, thereby mitigating the additional nutrient load imposed on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site by the development when fully occupied enabling the local planning authority to conclude on the basis of the best available scientific evidence that such additional nutrient loading will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the protected site, having regard to the conservation objectives for the site.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development is phosphate neutral in perpetuity in accordance with policies CP1, CP8 and DM1 of the Core Strategy as well as Paragraphs 187 and 193-195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Notes to applicant.

1. In accordance with paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework 25 the Council has worked in a positive and creative way with the applicant and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission

