

Application Details	
Application Reference Number:	12/25/0009
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Earliest decision date:	31 October 2025
Expiry Date	28 November 2025
Extension of time	
Decision Level	Delegated Decision
Description:	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
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 Refusal

2. Executive Summary of key reasons for recommendation

2.1 The proposal is considered contrary to policy with the adverse impact of the proposal on the character of the area and amenity of neighbours.

3. Planning Obligations and conditions and informatives

3.1 Conditions (full text in appendix 1)

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 erection of two dwellings in the car park following the demolition of the skittle alley.

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.

5. Planning (and enforcement) history

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
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
12/24/0003	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

6. Environmental Impact Assessment

Not required

7. Habitats Regulations Assessment

The proposed development would result in an increase in phosphate load within the catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors and as such would potentially be harmful to the Ramsar site. 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 P credits will be used as the mitigation to off set the phosphate load and the intention in the shadow HRA is to utilise phosphate credits from a recognised provider. On the basis that Natural England are satisfied with this approach, this will need to be secured through a condition.

8. Consultation and Representations

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

8.1 Date of consultation: 03 October 2025

8.2 Date of revised consultation (if applicable):

8.3 Press Date:

8.4 Site Notice Date:

8.5 **Consultees** the following were consulted:

Consultee	Comment	Officer Comment
CORFE PARISH COUNCIL	Objection - lack of community engagement, loss of pub, poor design and overdevelopment, no housing need, loss community facility, phosphate impact, not complied with DM2, contrary to Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan policy and not protect biodiversity.	10.1.12 10.1.1 and 10.1.3 10.1.1 10.1.9 10.1.12 10.1.6 10.1.9
SCC - RIGHTS OF WAY	No comments	
SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP	No comments	10.1.5
SCC - ECOLOGY	Having reviewed the ecology survey there were no roosts found and will not disturb foraging or commuting bats. Recommend condition re enhancement measures.	10.1.9
WESSEX WATER	No comments	
BLACKDOWN HILLS AONB SERVICE	Policy PL16 of new Management Plan applies.	10.1.3

	Design matters are particularly relevant to considering the effect on local character and conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Should the Authority approve we would support conditions to address design of curtilage, lighting, boundary and entrance design, materials and surfacing.	
SOMERSET WASTE PARTNERSHIP	No comments	

8.6 Local representations

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

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

Material Planning Considerations	
Objections(15)	Officer comment
Development not in keeping	Noted
Loss of pub and query viability	10.1.1
Lack of evidence of marketing at an appropriate price	10.1.1
Loss of employment and asset of community value	10.1.1
Traffic increase	10.1.5
Highway risk increased	10.1.5
Not in keeping with village & AONB	10.1.6
High density / inadequate amenity space	10.1.6 and 10.1.4
Lack of visibility	10.1.5
Parking inadequate	
Dependent on vehicle use increase traffic	10.1.5
Overlooking	10.1.7
Adverse impact on property to south	10.1.6
	10.1.3

Incongruous design	10.1.12
No affordable housing or need for market housing	
Contrary to policy DM1, DM2, SD1 & NPPF	Noted and 10.1.12
Pollution	10.1.12
No community consultation	10.1.12
Loss of employment	Noted
Accounts info relates to another site.	Noted
Disruption during construction	10.1.12
Support	Officer comment

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 AONB Management Plan 2025-2030

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

Public Realm Design Guide for the Garden Town, December 2021

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.

Neighbourhood plans:

None

9.1 National Planning Policy Framework

Sections 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14 & 15

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 prior to Covid to demonstrate non viability. The site has been marketed by a public house specialist since May 2023 for over 17 months without success and was put to auction but failed to receive suitable offers. 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 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.

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 elements are to be constructed in stone and slate roofs which reflect the character of the area. Plots 4 and 5 have been amended to a hipped roof and reduced in height more to more reflect the height of the neighbouring dwellings to the west and so would appear less dominant in the street scene being set back from the frontage. However the set back does not reflect the neighbouring properties to the west, the hipped roof is not in keeping and the extent of the parking set at the front still gives a cramped

appearance to the development not in keeping with the character of the area of the village in the National Landscape.

10.1.4 Quality of Accommodation

The new build semi detached properties provide 3 bedroom accommodation and this meets the space standard requirements of SADMP policy D10 as do the conversion units 1 and 2 of the main public house. Unit 3 is reduced to a one bed unit and this now meets the space standard. The amenity space externally is very limited however it does provide external space for each unit, although it is considered a reduction of plots 4 and 5 to one unit would give more amenity space for the site as a whole that would be more in keeping with the requirements of policy D12.

10.1.5 Access, Highway Safety and Parking Provision

The proposed scheme sets out to provide 5 units of accommodation and indicates 9 parking spaces. This is two per unit, other than unit 3 which has one. This level is considered appropriate and in line with policy A1 in light of the rural location and lack of local bus services. The outcome is maintaining a swathe of tarmac in front of the new dwellings and provision of a tandem space to the side of plot 5. 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 previous Highway Authority comments. 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 match the character of the area. The new build element however has been reduced in height to more to reflect the adjacent dwellings and will not appear so dominant in the street scene with the set back, although the roof alteration to a hip is out of character with surrounding properties. Retention of the set back still means it will tower over the garden of the neighbour and so would appear as an incongruous element detrimental to the character of the National Landscape area and contrary to policy DM1d of the Core Strategy.

10.1.7 The impact on neighbouring residential amenity

The proposed new build element will be set back into the site and will be around 7.8m high to the ridge. The hipped ends will face existing properties to the east and west but there is just one window serving a bathroom in the sides which can be obscure glazed and not give rise to overlooking. The new dwellings will be set above the existing properties to the east and on balance the reduced height is not considered to be unacceptably overbearing to their outlook. To the west the new dwellings will project some 6m beyond the rear of the property to the west. This would be overbearing and cause loss of light to the garden area closest to the dwelling. This is considered detrimental to the amenity of neighbours. An objection has been made on the grounds of loss of privacy. There's one window in each gable of the new properties, however this serves a bathroom and the rear windows will face a garden that at 15m long is considered to negate any significant adverse

impact.

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, the new rear gardens as well as 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. However NE has yet to approve 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 and it proposed that the new dwellings will be constructed using low carbon materials and energy efficient heating designs. A condition could be imposed on any approval to ensure measures to satisfy the climate change emergency and policy DM5.

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. 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

The creation of residential dwellings is CIL liable.

This proposed development measures approximately 460 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 £57,500.00. With index linking this increases to approximately £95,750.00.

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 site lies in a National Landscape and the development is likely to result in an increase in phosphates that would potentially damage the Levels and Moor Ramsar site. Furthermore the development would adversely impact on the character of the area and the amenity of neighbours contrary to policy DM1. In addition the development would result in the loss of a public house, a community facility, although it is considered that the pub is not viable and so the loss would not be contrary to policies CP3 of the Core Strategy and C4 of the SADMP. It is considered that while an element of the scheme may be acceptable the harm identified in the new build element to the character and appearance of the National Landscape and the amenity of existing neighbours outweigh the housing need identified.

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

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 – Reason/s for Refusal

- 1 The proposed development by reason of the siting, design and scale of the new dwellings would result in an unneighbourly development overbearing to the property to the west and would appear out of keeping with their surroundings contrary to policy DM1d of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and PL16 of the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2025-2030.

Notes to applicant.

1. In accordance with paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2025 the Council works in a positive and creative way with applicants and looks for solutions to enable the grant of planning permission. However in this case the applicant was unable to satisfy the key policy test and as such the application has been refused.

