

Planning Committee



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| Application Address | 22 Chewton Farm Road Christchurch BH23 5QN |
| Proposal | Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 14 apartments with underground parking |
| Application Number | 8/21/0690/FUL |
| Applicant | Fortitudo Ltd |
| Agent | CLPlanning |
| Ward and Ward Member(s) | Highcliffe & Walkford |
| Report status | Public |
| Meeting date | January 2022 |
| Summary of Recommendation | Approve subject to conditions and s106 |
| Reason for Referral to Planning Committee | Received 55 objections to the scheme, contrary to the Officer's recommendation. |
| Case Officer | Sophie Mawdsley |

Executive Summary

Summary of Key Issues

1. The key planning issues for Members to consider are set out below. Members will have to balance all of the planning issues and objectives when making a decision on the application, against policy and other material considerations.

Representations received

2. 67 representations have been received. A summary of the 55 objections, 1 comment and 21 support letters have been provided within the consultation section of the report.

Principle of development

3. The site is within a residential locality in the urban envelope where new residential development is permitted under policy KS2. The net increase of

dwelling would make a contribution to the five year housing supply, which is currently standing at 3.98 years.

Affordable Housing and Housing mix

4. The Viability Assessment indicates there is no viability for affordable housing and this has been robustly reviewed by consultants acting on behalf of the Council. This is discussed within the main body of the report. The Strategic Housing Assessment (SHMA 2015) states that 2 and 3 bedroom houses are what is mostly required in the Christchurch area. The provision of mainly 2 bed flats is not considered to technically meet this need. However, given the current housing land supply issues, the provision of 13 relatively spacious two bed units with parking is considered to be acceptable.

Design, Layout and form

5. The scale and footprint of the building is considered appropriate for the size of the plot and the scale of properties along Chewton Farm Road. The appearance of the building is also appropriate for this sylvan setting. The development is not considered to be contrary to policy H9 and complies with policies H12 and HE2.

Residential Amenity

6. The scheme does bring built form closer to the side and rear boundaries and the building will be more prominent than the existing property. However, the proposal is considered to comply with the test in Policy HE2 to be compatible in its relationship to nearby properties including minimising general disturbance to amenity and be in accordance with policy H12 by ensuring the residential amenities of existing and future occupiers of dwellings are not adversely affected by noise or disturbance or by loss of light.

Parking and Access

7. The BCP Parking Standards SPD states that one vehicle parking space is required per unit for 1 and 2 bed flats. There are 17 spaces shown in the basement and 3 visitor surface parking spaces at the front of the site. This level of provision is considered to be acceptable on this site and in this locality. The basement parking, with some additional details secured by condition is considered to be acceptable to BCP Highways and the traffic movements associated with the development and the adjacent development are not considered to result in significant or severe impacts on the local highway network and as such would not be contrary to the NPPF. It is considered the scheme is compliant with the Parking SPD and policies KS11 and KS12 of the Local Plan.

Landscape and Trees

8. The site and wider area has a sylvan character and there are two TPO oak trees at the front of the site. The proposals are considered to adequately protect these trees during construction and not lead to any undue pressure for future work to be carried out on them. The proposed landscaping scheme, with the exception of some revisions required to species it considered to be acceptable, having regard to the verdant character of Chewton Farm Road and policies HE2 and HE3 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity

9. The application has agreed to enter into a Unilateral Undertaking to secure the Heathland SAMM contribution in line with the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework to mitigate the impact on the protected heathland. An ecological appraisal has been undertaken and whilst further bat surveys are required prior to demolition, these can be secured by condition along with additional enhancement measures to provide biodiversity net gain.

Drainage

10. The site is within a low risk flood zone and a sustainable urban drainage system is proposed which is considered to be acceptable subject to further precise details being submitted via condition.

Description of Proposal

11. Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 14 apartments with underground parking

Description of Site and Surroundings

12. The locality has a sylvan character site and there are substantial trees within the plots and in particular along the frontages of sites providing a mature spacious suburban character. The site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order
13. Chewton Farm Road is characterised by individual detached properties set within substantial sylvan gardens and with deep frontages. Saved policy H9 of the Christchurch Borough Council Local Plan (2001) has identified this immediate area as having a special character worthy of protecting. To the rear of the site Avenue Road is characterised by a much more typical suburban layout with a more uniform and higher density of properties. The southern side of Avenue Road (backing onto Chewton Farm Road) also lies within the H9 policy area, the northern side does not, although there is no apparent difference in the character in the two sides of Avenue Road.
14. The adopted Christchurch Borough-wide Character Assessment (2003) identifies the site within the NC Area 5c : Chewton Common Walkford area and states; *'The lines of the Ringwood Road and Chewton Common Road represent some of the original routes through the area. Individual cottages front onto the roads giving occasional hints of the earlier development pattern. Individual detached houses front onto the Ringwood Road and Chewton Farm Road again reflecting the pre-estate housing. A small estate of large houses known as Chewton Farm Estate is characterised by more generous garden plots, and a small scale private roadway.'*

Relevant Planning History

15. 8/20/0752/OUT - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 14 apartments with underground parking at 20 Chewton Farm Road. Approved

16. 8/21/0331/CONDR - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 14 apartments with underground parking. Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Application 8/20/0752/OUT to make revisions to the design of the building. 20 Chewton Farm Road. Approved

Constraints

- Neighbouring LPA 1000m Buffer
- Agricultural Land Classification
- SSSI Impact Risk Zone
- Highways Inspected Network
- Green Belt
- Airport Safeguarding - 0.00m
- Wessex Water Sewer Flooding
- Dorset Minerals Consultation Area
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Tree Preservation Order

Public Sector Equalities Duty

17. In accordance with section 149 Equality Act 2010, in considering this proposal due regard has been had to the need to —
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Other relevant duties

18. In accordance with section 40 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, in considering this application, regard has been had, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of this function, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.
19. For the purposes of this application, in accordance with section 2 Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, regard has been had to the register that the Council maintains of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots in the Council's area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding.

Consultations

20. **Natural England** - None received

21. **Wessex Water** – No objection. Provides comments on foul drainage connections.
22. **Dorset & Wilts Fire & Rescue Service** - The development would need to be designed and built to meet current Building Regulations requirements
23. **Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council** - Objection

“Firstly, the approval of the development at 20 Chewton Farm Road should NOT be seen as precedent for this development. In addition, the objection argument for 20 Chewton farm road still stands and these are reiterated.

Overdevelopment - This proposed development of apartments, replacing a single house, represents a huge overdevelopment of the site.

Character of the area- The design, bulk and mass are totally out of keeping with the long-established character of the Chewton Farm area. It will create an urbanising and cramming effect on what is a unique and semi-rural part of Christchurch, adjacent to the Green Belt and Chewton Common.

Housing needs - The development will not address the housing needs of the area as identified in the Eastern Dorset 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment. There is no shortage of flats in Highcliffe and it makes no contribution to affordable housing either in allocated units or financial contribution. The development will not provide housing of a type and price affordable to local people and is more likely to be occupied by those from outside the area.

Privacy- The current property does not overlook anyone; the proposed new building over three floors would result in a loss of privacy for many properties.

Traffic generation and highway safety - Chewton Farm Road is a narrow, rural road which has specific traffic calming measures including several chicanes and weight restrictions to reduce the amount and size of vehicles using it - almost doubling the number of dwellings in the road will create many extra cars plus construction vehicles using it. There is no parking permitted on the road or verges and there are no pavements given the rural nature of the area. Pedestrian safety will be compromised by additional flats and accompanying vehicles using the road

If BCP as a planning authority have concern for sensitive and appropriate development this application should be rejected”

24. **BCP Trees & Landscaping**

“ The Officer has seen the submitted Tree Report ref: DS/81821/AC, and Tree Protection Plan 1 ref: DS/81821/AC, both dated 28/05/21 and is concerned with amount of works proposed within the RPA of Oaks (T1+T13). Close arboricultural supervision by the Consultant would be required for any works within the RPAs, if planning is approved.

The Officer notes that three mature trees were felled on site prior to the planning application. The proposal also involves removing existing landscaping from the frontage, which will impact on the character of Chewton

Farm Road. The Officer has seen the submitted 'Site, Block and Location Plans' ref:9472/00, dated May 2021 and welcomes the details provided of the proposed drainage and soakaway.

The Officer has seen the agent's comments dated 30/11/21, in relation to the concerns expressed about the positioning of the bin store within the root protection area of Oak (T1). These concerns remain and the Officer would want to see arboricultural supervision of the installation of this structure, if planning is approved.

The Officer has also seen the submitted Landscape proposal, drawing: 22861/IB, and welcomes the proposed tree planting at the front of the site. However, they would argue that Robinia pseudacacia 'Umbraculifera' and Prunus accolade and not in keeping with the sylvan character of Chewton Farm Road. Therefore, native tree species are recommended".

BCP Highways

"The proposed access includes closing one of the existing access on Chewton Farm Road. A condition should be imposed to expunge the redundant crossover. Visibility appears to be suitable for both vehicle and pedestrians due to the use of a low vegetation front boundary treatment. A condition should be imposed to ensure this remains kept to a suitable height.

The development proposes 20 car parking spaces, 3 space are at surface level and the remainder are located within a basement car park accessed via a ramp on the left side of the building. The LPA's BCP Parking Standards SPD indicate this is located in Zone D. For developments such as proposed flats with less than 4 Habitable Rooms are expected to provide 1 space per unit. Therefore, a total of 14 spaces are expected. The proposal exceeds this by 6 spaces and in response to this overprovision sets out reasoning within the Design and Access Statement justifying it based on responding to local concerns. The parking bays appear to be on an allocated basis and consequently make no allocation for visitor needs. It would be normally expected that the surface parking be used for visitor purposes. This could be conditioned if the LPA considered it appropriate.

Parking bays provided are a mixture of 2.5m x 5m at surface and 2.6m x 5m in the underground car park. In terms of length both sets accords with the LPA's Parking Standards SPD, but the surface spaces are just short in width. There is limited scope to enlarge the bays given the bin store position and can be considered on balance acceptable. The underground parking is accessed via a ramp. No details are shown regarding the gradient or transitions. This could be conditioned. A pair of staircases are shown as emergency access with the eastern staircase being surrounded by grassed lawn, similarly the western staircase leads off into the grassed area. A 6m aisle width has been provided for spaces 3 to 8, and for 9 to 17 this enables sufficient turning and manoeuvring spaces for vehicles entering and exiting the parking spaces. For spaces 1 and 2 the aisle width is tighter at 5.4m due to the lift shaft position. Whilst harder to manoeuvre these spaces are still usable. Some tracking information is shown.

A total of 24 cycle parking spaces have been provided in line exceeding the Parking Standards SPD requirement of 16 (14 for residents and 1.4 for visitors) within the basement area. This includes provision for visitor cycle parking. No physical separation or barrier is shown between the cycle parking and spaces No. 6 to 8 however it would be expected that vehicles are unlikely to damage cycles using the Sheffield type stands. Cyclists are expected to make use of the ramp into and out of the basement parking along with cars. Given the limited number of vehicles mixing with cyclists this is unlikely to result in serious risk of collisions to cyclists, particularly given the low speeds expected on site”.

25. **BCP Lead Flood Authority**

“Firstly a " erection of 14 Apartments" this is considered a major planning application so the drainage should comply with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Sustainable Drainage Systems - Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems - March 2015.

The application form states that surface water will be disposed of to a Sustainable drainage system and the supporting Drainage Strategy document shows this is technically feasible. I therefore have no objection on drainage of flooding grounds although I would recommend a SuDs condition because the ground information is largely based on the adjacent site and (although unlikely) this site may be found to be different when construction commences so any final design should be based on actual site data”.

26. **BCP Viability Housing Development Officer - None received**

27. **BCP Waste and Recycling – No objection**

Representations

28. 77 representations in total have been received to the proposal.

29. 55 objections have been received on the following material planning grounds;

- Loss of TPO trees and resulting harm to character
- Damage to tree root systems
- Loss of sylvan character
- Ventilation for basement cause noise impact on neighbouring amenities
- Contrary to policy H9 – policy not out of date; development out of character with special and unique character of this area.
- Basement car park not safe or practicably workable
- Chewton Farm Road narrow with no pavements – additional traffic and parking cause highway safety issues.
- Road is a rat run
- Insufficient parking
- The road will require double yellow lanes
- Construction vehicles cause congestion and highway danger
- Construction cause destruction to road

- Excavation of basement parking is waste of energy and harm the environment
- Underground parking disturb water courses – increase flooding
- Increased footprint lead to flooding
- Missed opportunity for sustainable eco development
- No green credentials
- No affordable housing
- Flats not required in Highcliffe area
- Loss of family housing
- Loss of beautiful property with good parking and garden – loss to the community
- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Loss of light for adjacent properties
- Double the number of residents in Chewton Farm Road
- Scale of building out of character
- Gross overdevelopment
- Size, bulk and mass is out of place
- Cramped and out of keeping
- Opening floodgates for downward transformation of area
- Balance should be tilted against development due to adverse impacts outweighing the benefits.
- Christchurch can easily meet housing targets
- Street scene should not show adjacent development
- Loss of wildlife habitats and open space
- Increased pressure on infrastructure - sewage

30. A letter of objection has been received by the Ward Member Cllr Brooks on the following grounds;

- Development at No 20 does not set a precedent
- Area has a unique character- must not be changed
- Character of area recognised by policy H9
- Development does not provide housing of a type and price affordable to local people and likely to be second homes.

31. 1 comment received on the following grounds;

- Traffic calming driven parking into surrounding roads
- Increased repair and maintenance costs
- Local young people not being considered

32. 21 letters of support received on the following grounds;

- Development contribute to housing
- Efficient use of land

- Proposals for unconstrained land should be supported
- Compliments the street scene and adjacent consent
- Replace un efficient home for 14 more environmentally friendly homes
- Brownfield development should be supported – reduced need to build on greenbelt
- Contribute to local economy

Key Issues

33. The key issues involved with this proposal are:

- Principle of development
- Type and size of properties
- Affordable housing
- Design, layout and form
- Residential amenity
- Parking and Access
- Trees and Landscaping
- Biodiversity
- Flooding and Drainage

34. These issues will be considered along with other matters relevant to this proposal below.

Policy Context

Development Plan:

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy 2014

- KS1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- KS2: Settlement Hierarchy
- KS4: Housing Provision
- KS11: Transport and Development
- KS12: Parking Provision
- HE2: Design of New Development
- HE3: Landscape Quality
- LN1: Size and type of new dwellings
- LN2: Design, Layout and Density of New Housing Development
- ME1: Safeguarding Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- ME2: Protection of Dorset Heathlands
- ME3: Sustainable Development Standards for New Development
- ME4: Renewable Energy provision
- ME6: Flood management, mitigation and defence

Christchurch Borough Council Local Plan (2001) Saved Policies

- H9: Chewton Farm Estate
- H12: Residential Infill

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD 2020 – 2025
Parking Standards SPD 2021
Christchurch Borough-wide Character Assessment (2003)

35. **National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”/”Framework”)**

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 11 –

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

.....

For **decision-taking** this means:

- (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole.”

The relevant sections are;

- Section 2 Achieving sustainable development
- Section 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 12 Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

36. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF as set out above in paragraph 11 of the NPPF. The Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply as it currently stands at 3.98 years (April 2019). Having regard to Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and given the above, the tilted balance is potentially engaged (Para 11 d). The site will provide 13 additional units towards the supply of housing but also lies within 5 km of a European Habitat site and is within current and future flood zones. The sections below

will assess the proposal including in the context of footnote 7 of the Framework and impacts on relevant habitats sites and flood risk.

37. The site is within an established residential area within the Walkford area and policy KS2 .
38. Reference is made in the representations about this specific area being outside of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015. It must be recognised that this has been superseded (with exception of methodology) with the 2019 data and interactive map. This evidence shows that the western side of Chewton Farm Road lies within land included within the potential supply. Highcliffe and Walkford Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted to BCP Council and the Independent Examiner. A statement of Common Ground has been requested by the examiner. However, at this point in time as the Local Planning Authority has not received their review of the plan and any recommendations, the plan attracts limited weight in line with national guidance. The Issues and Options Consultation for BCP Local Plan has not been published at the time this report was written and any draft would also attract limited weight in the decision making process, again following Government guidance.

Type and size of properties

39. Policy LN1 refers to the type and size of units. The Strategic Housing Assessment (SHMA 2015) states that 2 and 3 bedroom houses are what is mostly required in the Christchurch area (see Appendix C). The provision of 1 x 1 bed and 13 x 2 bed flats is not considered to technically meet this need. However, given the current housing land supply issues, the provision of 13 relatively spacious two bed units with parking is considered to be acceptable and there is not sufficient justification for refusing the application.
40. The policy also refers to the Housing Quality Indicators. Whilst these have been overtaken by the National Space Standards, they are still referred to in the adopted Local Plan and therefore are a material consideration. The proposed two bed units (4 bedspace) range between 71.6sqm and 98.1sqm and the one bed (2 bedspace) flat measures 55.6sqm. The HQI for Unit Size suggests that for a 4 bedspace unit (2 double bedrooms), the internal space should be between 67sqm and 75sqm and the internal space for a two bedspace (1 double bedroom) unit must be between 45 50sqm. Therefore, the proposal is considered to meet the HQI for Unit Sizes and complies with this aspect of Policy LN1.

Affordable Housing

41. Policy LN3 of the Local Plan stipulates that 40% of the units on site should be affordable or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision may be acceptable. This would equate to 5 affordable units. However, a viability assessment was submitted with the planning application. This has been independently verified by the District Valuation Office and they have concluded the scheme is not viable to provide any affordable housing.

42. Whilst it is regrettable no affordable housing provision is being secured, it has been accepted by the Council in light of policy LN3 and the NPPF which take account of viability issues.

Design, form and layout

43. Core Strategy (CS) Policy LN2 requires that the design and layout of new housing development should maximise the density of development but this is to be to a level which is acceptable for the locality. CS Policy HE2 complements the design requirements in section 7 of the NPPF by requiring that development be compatible with or improve its surroundings in relation to 11 criteria including layout, site coverage, visual impact and relationship to nearby properties.
44. Policy H9 refers to Chewton Farm Road and the pre-amble states that this area is worthy of protection and is at risk from infill development due to the potential loss of substantial residential properties in large plots providing large family accommodation which the Plan state is not in abundance throughout the remainder of the Plan area. The policy states development including one or more gardens should not be permitted where it adversely affects the special character and amenity of the established residential area.
45. It is recognised that this policy is nearly 20 years old although it still forms part of the Development Plan. The more recent Core Strategy policy HE2 refers to development being of a high quality, reflecting and enhancing areas of recognised local distinctiveness. Having regard to the policy context, it is considered that the current application offers a sensitive form of development. In addition, the more recent SHMA data indicates that 2 and 3 bedroom properties are what is required in the Christchurch area, rather than larger properties. This suggests that the evidence for the original H9 policy has changed. It is considered that the scheme is not contrary to policy H9 because the flat development does not adversely affect the special character of Chewton Farm Road.
46. The design and scale of the building is considered appropriate for the size of the plot and the scale of properties along Chewton Farm Road. The overall ridge height and eaves height respects the heights of the residential properties along the street. It is clearly recognised that the new building is significantly bigger than the existing two storey property on the site; however, the plot is large enough to accommodate the new building and there are sufficient separation distances between the proposed building, the boundaries and neighbouring buildings to retain the spacious character of the area. The building steps in towards the rear and has a lower ridge height, reducing the bulk and mass of built form within the rear part of the site. The scheme retains key trees and thereby the characteristic soft frontages of properties within Chewton Farm Road.
47. The design and appearance of the building is also appropriate for this sylvan setting. The gables on the front elevations with the bay windows provide interest and articulation. The proposed materials of stone, brick and New England boarding and slate effect tiles for the roof are considered to be suitable for this location. The building has a very similar form to the approved

scheme on the adjacent site at No 20, although the detailing and palette of materials is different which provides some contrast between the development. This is considered important as Chewton Farm Road is characterised by individual properties, each with their own architectural style. The representations have referred to having the two buildings in this area erodes the special character of the locality and allowing the redevelopment of No 20 should not set a precedent for permitting this current scheme. Each application is determined on its own merits. The adjacent approval is a material consideration to this decision; however the current proposal in isolation and in combination with the adjacent development is considered to be acceptable and would not result in a negative change to the character of this part of the Christchurch area.

48. The scheme is considered to comply with the test in Policy HE2 to be compatible with or improve its surroundings in its layout; site coverage; architectural style; scale; bulk; height; materials and visual impact. The proposal also accords with saved Policy H12 which states; '*Developments will be permitted provided that they are appropriate in character, scale, design and materials to the immediate locality*'.

Residential Amenities

49. To the north west of the site, the dwelling at No 24 is sited. This is a two storey detached hipped roof property with a single storey hipped roof garage alongside its southern boundary. There is a first floor window facing the application site; however it is set approximately 12 metres off the boundary. At the closest point at the front of the building there is 5 metres between the proposed building and No 24. This increases to 8.6m half way along the building. There are ground and first floor windows proposed for the north east elevation and these will serve bedrooms. There are also 2 rooflights serving a kitchen and a bedroom. Given the separation distances and the presence of the garage on the boundary, it is not considered that these windows will cause an unacceptable level of overlooking to the occupiers of No 24. No 24 has a large rear garden and the first bedroom window serving flat 8 is sited 5 metres away from the side boundary and therefore it is not considered to result in a loss of privacy for No 24 within their amenity space. The proposed building would be positioned to the south west of No 24 so there may be a slight loss of sunlight reaching part of the garden during the winter months. However, the property or garden would not be subject to a significant loss of sunlight throughout the year or at all times of the day. Concerns have been raised with regards to the proposed vents for the basement parking close to the boundary. Further details of these could be secured by condition, in terms of their specification to ensure minimal disruption to the adjacent occupier.
50. The properties to the rear of the site lie within Avenue Road. These properties have long rear gardens. The proposed building is positioned 13 metres from the rear boundary and the back to back relationship is approximately 31 metres with No 8 Avenue Road and 30 metres with No 10 Avenue Road. It is appreciated the new building, due to its 2½- storey scale and height of 9.5 metres (at rear) will be visible from the rear gardens at the rear and there are dormer windows and inset balconies at first floor level. However, due to the

separation distances, the scheme is considered to minimise any potential loss of privacy.

51. No 20 lies to the south of the application site and a chalet bungalow currently occupies this site. However, permission has been granted to redevelop the site with 14 flats. The access drives down into the basement parking areas lie adjacent to each other on either side of the boundary. There are ground and first floor bedroom windows with a southerly aspect which look towards the proposed building at No 20. There is 10.4 metres between the buildings which is considered sufficient to minimise harmful levels of overlooking between the flats. It is very likely that this adjacent scheme will go ahead; however, the impact on the current property at No 20 also needs to be considered in the event that the development does not take place. No 20 is positioned at an angle on its plot so the northern rear corner lies close to the northern boundary with No 22 than the frontage. The garage of No 20 sits along the boundary with the application site and the hipped roof of the chalet bungalow hips away from this boundary. There are three rooflights on the roof slope facing No 22. The side of the proposed building at No 22 would be sited 8 metres from the rear corner of No 20. The proposed built form would extend further into the site beyond the rear building line of No 20; however, given the distance from the side boundary and the size of the plots, the relationship is not considered to be harmful to warrant refusal. As mentioned above, there are bedroom windows on the southern elevation and these could look towards the conservatory structure on the rear of No 20. However, the distance at this point would be 11 metres which is considered sufficient to minimise harmful levels of overlooking and not appear overbearing or result in a loss of light.
52. The proposed development will result in a higher level traffic movements to the site than the existing single dwelling and in combination with the approved scheme on the adjacent site. However, with the location of the parking within the basement, it is considered the impacts of these movements within the site would be minimised. The residential use, although of a higher density than the existing is compatible within this residential area and it is an acceptable relationship for residential properties to adjoin one another. Due to the size of the building and number of openings, there would be increased light levels on the site. However, as it is for a domestic purpose and again with the parking underground this reduces the requirement for high levels of external lighting at the front of the site.
53. The scheme is considered to comply with the test in Policy HE2 to be compatible in its relationship to nearby properties including minimising general disturbance to amenity and be in accordance with policy H12 by ensuring the residential amenities of existing and future occupiers of dwellings are not adversely affected by noise or disturbance or by loss of light.

Parking and Access

54. The BCP Parking Standards SPD places the site within Zone D and this equates to one space per unit for 1 and 2 bed flats. There are 17 spaces shown in the basement and 3 visitor surface parking spaces at the front of the site. This level of provision is considered over what is required; however it is considered to be acceptable on this site and in this locality. There is cycle

parking for up to 24 bikes provided in the basement. There are no footpaths along Chewton Farm Road, just grass verges and therefore there is minimal opportunity for safe pedestrian access onto the public highway and access to the facilities within Highcliffe and Walkford. BCP Highways have raised no objection to the level of vehicle and cycle parking provision.

55. There have been objections raised with regards to the specifications of the basement parking; however BCP Highways have considered the layout and access to the basement parking level and are satisfied that it will work subject to a condition securing precise details of the ramp. The SPD states;

'For situations requiring transition ramps, any transition ramp should be at least 3m in length and its gradient half the gradient of the ramp. These transition gradients should be sited at the top and bottom of the ramp to reduce the risk of vehicle grounding. A separate equality compliant pedestrian access route will be required where ramps exceed 1:12. Adequate headroom should be maintained of no less than 2.3m.'

56. The submitted basement plans show a height of 2.3m at the entrance and there are two sets of pedestrian steps either side of the building along with a lift in the centre of the building providing access to the basement level. The basement floor plan indicates how vehicles could enter and exit space no 14. With regards to the spaces 3 to 6, there is 6 metres between them which provides the necessary space for manoeuvring. The lift shaft does reduce this distance to 5.4m for spaces 1 and 2; however this does not make them unusable.
57. The SPD goes onto to say; *'Columns should be located at a distance of 0.8m from the front of the space to facilitate access and egress without impacting the ability to open car doors'*. The plan shows the columns 0.8m from the front of the parking spaces; however the word indicate is used on the plan and therefore the precise and exact column locations can be secured by condition. Overall, Officers are satisfied that the basement parking and ramp can be provided to meet the requirements and exact details can be provided through a condition.
58. The traffic movements associated with the development and even in combination with the adjacent development are not considered to result in significant or severe impacts on the local highway network and as such would not be contrary to the NPPF. It is considered the scheme is compliant with the Parking SPD and policies KS11 and KS12 of the Local Plan.
59. The bin stores for the flats would be positioned adjacent to the front boundary, behind the existing holly hedge and next to the pedestrian entrance to the site. This is in a good location for the BCP Kerbside collection and BCP Waste and Recycling have raised no objection.

Trees and Landscaping

60. Chewton Farm Road has a sylvan character and the application site has a number of trees within the site and on the border which contribute to the verdant character of the plot and wider area. There are two TPO oak trees at

the front of the site. The proposed pedestrian access and bin storage area is within the root protection area (RPA) of T1 on the south western corner; however this area is already subject to hard surfacing with the driveway in this position. Therefore, it is not considered that the new path and bin storage would cause significant additional pressure on this tree. T11, the TPO oak on the north eastern front corner is positioned adjacent to the proposed main vehicular access. This tree already lies adjacent to one of the access points onto the site so this relationship will not alter. The tree protection plan shows that the first section of the drive would be constructed using a cellular confinement system to protect the root system of the oak tree.

61. There is a collection of trees along the rear boundary and although not covered by the Tree Preservation Order, they will be protected with fencing during the construction period and given the distance from the proposed building are not considered to be a constraint on the development. A full landscaping plan has been provided for the site and this includes additional tree planting at the front of the site which is welcomed; however as highlighted by the Tree Officer, the proposed False Acacia are not suitable for this position and it is considered an alternative and native species is used. 2 Betular Pendula (silver birch) are proposed for the rear garden, where trees have been previously removed. The use of block paving for the hard surfacing at the front of the site and the access ramp into the basement is appropriate, providing a softer appearance than tarmac. With the exception of the tree species at the front, the landscaping scheme is considered to be appropriate and acceptable and it will help maintain the sylvan character of the Chewton Farm Road. The proposal is considered to comply with policies HE2 and HE3 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity

62. The application site lies within 5km but beyond 400m of Dorset Heathland which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and as a European wildlife site. The proposal for net increase in residential units is, in combination with other plans and projects and in the absence of avoidance and mitigation measures, likely to have a significant effect on the site. It has therefore been necessary for the Council, as the appropriate authority, to undertake an appropriate assessment of the implications for the protected site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.
63. Natural England has advised that on a site that lies between 400m and 5km from the SSSIs, an appropriate assessment may reasonably conclude that there would not be an adverse cumulative impact on the integrity of the SSSIs. This is on the basis of the adopted Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2015 - 2020 which will provide mitigation against the impacts of new dwellings on the heathland. The Framework requires a financial contribution from the applicant to go towards funding the mitigation measures which are provision of a financial contribution to go towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) of the SSSIs.
64. The applicant has submitted a draft Unilateral Undertaking to secure the SAMM contribution and once this is fully completed and signed the proposal

will be acceptable in terms of its impact on protected heathlands and it would accord with Policy ME2 of the Core Strategy.

65. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal forms part of the application documentation. No evidence of bats was found within the property; however given the low potential of the building the report suggests further bat surveys need to be undertaken. The vegetation on site does provide for some nesting opportunities; however the site provided limited opportunities for reptiles. The following mitigation measures are recommended;
- Bat activity survey between May and August – may require additional mitigation.
66. The additional surveys required can be secured by condition and to ensure these are carried out prior to any demolition on the site. Regard has been given to the Standing Advice on bats provided by Natural England and in this case a condition is considered to be appropriate given no evidence of bats was found on the property at the time of the survey. If any mitigation measures are required following the surveys, these will need to be approved by the Local Planning Authority before any development commences.
67. There are no specific enhancement measures suggested in order to provide biodiversity net gain. This is disappointing as the scale of the building and size of plot provides ample opportunities to provide these gains. However, it is considered this can be secured by condition. Such measures could include bird boxes, bat tiles, hedgehog friendly fences, log piles for stag beetles and native planting. With this secured, the scheme is considered to be in accordance with policy ME1.

Flooding and drainage

68. There is no indication of existing surface water flooding on the site and the site is within Flood Zone 1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all major development proposals to take due consideration of surface water management and should offer a Drainage Strategy that does not create or exacerbate off site worsening and should mitigate flood risk to the site.
69. The Drainage Strategy states that two soakaways would be provided to the front and rear of the site. There is a discrepancy between the Report and the drainage plan as this shows one soakaway in the rear of the site. Part of the front driveway and surface car parking spaces will be constructed of permeable materials. In principle the use of soakaways are acceptable and further precise details can be secured by condition. The proposal is considered to be compliant with policy ME6 of the Local Plan.

Sustainable construction/energy efficiency

70. There are no specific proposals set out in the proposal for renewable energy sources and sustainable construction. However, the Energy Assessment states that the orientation and design of the development uses passive design features to minimise need for artificial light, heating and cooling and maximises solar gain. It is stated the construction methods will achieve an energy efficient building.

71. Given policies ME2 and ME3, it is considered appropriate to condition the requirement for renewable energy sources to be incorporated into the scheme and as stated in the Statement, the roof lends itself to incorporating solar panels.

Planning Balance/Conclusion

72. The application has been carefully considered in relation to the impact of the development on the character and appearance of this area and the cumulative impact of this development and the approved adjacent development at No 20. It is clearly recognised that there is a high level of opposition from the local residents to the proposal; however it is considered that the plot can accommodate the development as set out and would not harm the character of the immediate area. The design and layout minimises the impact on the residential amenities of the neighbouring plots. The parking and access arrangements are acceptable.
73. Having regard to Paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF, given the lack of housing land supply, it is considered that the housing policies of the Development Plan are out of date. However, given the site lies within 5k of a protected European wildlife site para 11d i) is engaged. For the reasons set out in preceding paragraphs, the NPPF does not provide clear reasons for refusal and therefore, the titled balance is engaged.
74. The provision of 13 residential units towards the housing supply provides a social benefit to the Christchurch area and wider BCP Council locality; some economic benefit with jobs created during the construction phase and future residents contributing to the local economy and environmental benefits from the efficient use of land and the provision of additional planting on the site. As stated above, the scheme is not considered to harm the character and visual amenities of the area and the impact on amenities is minimised.
75. The scheme is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole.

Recommendation

76. GRANT permission subject to
- (a) the following conditions; and
 - (b) a deed pursuant to section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) securing the terms below with power delegated to the Head of Planning (or any other officer nominated by them for such a purpose) to agree specific wording provided such wording in the opinion of the Head of Planning (or other relevant nominated officer) does not result in a reduction in the terms identified:
 - Strategic Management Monitoring financial contribution in line with Dorset Heathland Framework 2020-2025.

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.

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

9472 / 100 C AMENDED SITE PLAN
9472 / 103 A AMENDED ELEVATIONS
9472 / 101 A AMENDED FLOOR PLANS 2
9472 / 101 Floor Plans 1
AC PLANS10.9.21

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

3. No development above DPC (damp proof course) shall take place until details and samples of all external facing and roofing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). All works shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with the details as approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA.

Reason: This information is required prior to above ground work commencing to ensure satisfactory visual relationship of the new development to the existing.

4. Notwithstanding the submitted landscape plan, no development above DCP (damp proof course) shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include hard surfacing materials; means of enclosure; details of boundary planting, schedules of plants (noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate) and alternative native tree species for the front of the site.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development and the planting carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development or its first occupation, whichever is the sooner. Any planting found damaged, dead or dying in the first five years following their planting are to be duly replaced with appropriate species.

Reason: This information is required prior to above ground work commencing as the long term establishment, maintenance and landscaping of the site is necessary to preserve the amenity of the locality.

5. Prior to commencement of development, a detailed Construction Management Plan shall be prepared and submitted for written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Management Plan shall include

safe access to the site for deliveries, loading and unloading of plant and materials and wheel cleansing of vehicles prior to egress from the site onto the public highway. The development shall only take place in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan including throughout the construction phase of the development.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate development of the site and to ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted upon.

6. Prior to commencement of development including any demolition, additional bat surveys must be undertaken in line with the Ecology Appraisal dated February 2020 and the result of the survey and a Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan must be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to the commencement of works. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure protected species are not harmed by the development and mitigation and enhancement measures are secured.

7. Prior to the commencement of development, the finalised surface water drainage strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall include appropriate arrangements for the discharge of surface water. The drainage scheme shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not increase the risk of surface water flooding on the site or on nearby sites.

8. Other than for the erection of tree protection, before any equipment, materials or machinery to be used in connection with any works associated with the development hereby permitted is brought onto the application site;
 - (a) a meeting on site that includes a representative from the Local Planning Authority shall take place to confirm the methods of protecting trees on and adjacent to the site during development in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan both ref: DS/81821, dated 27/10/21.
 - (b) there shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - (i) any requirements identified at that meeting in addition to those already set out in the Tree Information for the purposes of tree protection; and
 - (ii) to the extent it is not already identified in the Tree Information, a timetable for the undertaking and retention of all identified measures relating to tree protection.

The tree protection shall be retained until the development is completed and nothing shall be placed within the fencing, nor shall any ground levels be altered or excavations made without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of tree protection

9. No development above DCP (damp proof course) shall take place until full details of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy installations on the development hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To provide a sustainable form of development.

10. Before the development hereby approved is occupied or utilised the turning and parking shown on the approved plans must have been constructed. Thereafter, these areas, must be permanently maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for the purposes specified.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate development of the site and to ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted upon.

11. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, details regarding underground parking layout with exact column positions, access arrangements including access ramp and transition ramps gradients shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate development of the site and to ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted upon.

12. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use and notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modifications) visibility splays shall be provided at the site entrance clear of all obstructions over 0.6m above the level of the adjoining highway, including the reduction in level of the land if necessary. Nothing over that height shall be permitted to remain, be placed, built, planted or grown on the land so designated.

Reason: To ensure that a vehicle can see or be seen when exiting the access.

13. Before the development is occupied or utilised the cycle parking facilities shown on Drawing Number 9472 / 101 must have been constructed. Thereafter, these must be maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for the purposes specified.

Reason: To ensure the proper construction of the parking facilities and to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes

14. Before the development is occupied or utilised the existing redundant highway vehicular crossing must be expunged and reinstated to a specification which must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate reinstatement of the adjacent highway.

15. No development above DCP (damp proof course) shall take place until details of the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and associated infrastructure shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The approved details shall be implemented and brought into operation prior to the occupation of any residential unit hereby approved. Thereafter the Electric Vehicle Charging Points shall be permanently retained available for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the proper construction of the parking facilities and to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes.

16. No development above DCP (damp proof course) shall take place until details of renewable energy generation for the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and implemented prior to occupation.

Reason: To provide for energy efficiency measures.

Background Documents:

Documents uploaded to that part of the Council's website that is publicly accessible and specifically relates to the application the subject of this report including all related consultation responses, representations and documents submitted by the applicant in respect of the application.

Notes. This excludes all documents which are considered to contain exempt information for the purposes of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972. Reference to published works is not included.