

## WEYMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY PLANNING NEWS AND NOTES November/December 2021

The work of the Planning and Environment Committee during the last two months of 2021.

### THE ANNUAL AWARDS

Much of our attention in November and December was devoted to considering candidate projects for the Society's Annual Awards. As no awards were made during 2020, these cover both 2020 and 2021. As a result, there were two top awards. The 2020 Annual Award was won for restoration work to Deheers, the Victorian warehouse on Custom House Quay, and its conversion to apartments, with the new Ebike cafe on the ground floor.

For 2021, the Award was made for the restoration and



2021: The Old Fish Market

improvements to the Old Fish Market, with new uses including a restaurant on the upper floor, opened to the public for the first

time. We were delighted to be able to hold open-air ceremonies on Custom House Quay to present the two Annual Award plaques on the 16<sup>th</sup> December, when fortunately the weather was mild and the rain held off.



2020 Deheers

Owing to the ongoing Covid situation, it has been reluctantly decided to postpone the Society's Annual Awards Evening at which all of the awards are presented until it can be more safely held, which we hope will be in the late spring. Meanwhile, brief details of all the winning projects are set out in the separate report under 'Awards' on the website.

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The last two months of 2021 saw a few major development proposals and various planning applications to modify previously permitted schemes. As usual, the vast majority of applications, both large and small, tend to be for residential development.

#### Land North of Littlemoor Road (P/RES/2021/04938)

Details have now been submitted to the Council for the proposed 500 home neighbourhood north of Littlemoor Road. This has long been accepted as a site for housing since the 2015 Local Plan, and permission for up to 500 dwellings was finally granted in December 2020. Now these 'Reserved Matters', although showing a fairly dense development, do largely follow the illustrative layout which accompanied the approved outline plans, so at the time of writing we have not commented on them.

#### Waterside Holiday Park

WP/20/00588/FUL. We have objected to a proposal for the use of Waterside Holiday Park at Bowleaze as a year-round holiday park. The fear which we and others have expressed is that this could open the way for permanent residential use, and thus the loss of this major provider of holiday accommodation.

WP/20/00756/FUL. At the same time, the application to enlarge the site eastwards into open fields is still awaiting a decision. We objected strongly to the original proposal for it to extend out along the whole valley floor. Later, a much reduced plan was put forward, which, while an improvement, still leaves a whole field to be covered in 'lodges', projecting out from the existing site and highly visible from the Coast Path.



*Reduced area shown in red*

We welcomed the reduction in size but maintained our strong concerns about this proposed incursion into such a sensitive area.

### **Curtis Fields**

In 2018 we made strong representations to the Council about a proposed access from the Curtis Fields housing development on to Lanehouse Rocks Road (WP/18/00749/RES). This was to be at the steepest part of the hill leading up to Wyke, on this major route to Portland, which could result in serious air pollution from heavy vehicles having to slow down or stop. Now the developers have acquired a plot of land much lower down the hill, which affords an alternative access to the new housing estate, and have applied for permission for this, including nine additional houses (P/FUL/2021/04774). While we are pleased that this would largely solve the original problem, the new location is in a more populous area, with another road access nearly opposite. If the Council decides to grant permission, we very much hope that the junction layout can be made as safe and workable as possible.

### **Mandeville Road (WD/D/20/03238)**

At Wyke Regis, a development of up to 36 dwellings is proposed for a field on the east side of Mandeville Road. This is substantially less than an earlier proposal for 91 dwellings, for which permission was refused, and most of this new site is on a single long, narrow plot close to the existing houses. However, the application also includes four bungalows along Mandeville Road itself, filling in the remaining gap. We have objected strongly in particular to this element of the proposals, as the bungalows would block off the open space which has been left as a wildlife corridor for movement between the Fleet meadows and the wooded slopes of Curtis Fields, both protected by special designations.

### **Portland**

On Portland the constant drip-drip of applications for housing development continues. Currently 25 dwellings have been approved in Fortuneswell subject to a legal agreement, and there are several more applications in the pipeline for housing on sites in Easton and Southwell. We have objected to a plan for 34 dwellings on an area of grassland with trees and bushes west of Wakeham (P/FUL/2021/04113). While we had accepted the principle of residential development north of this site as a continuation of the housing area near the Tesco car park, we believe that this proposal is an extension too far into the open land to the south. Portland Town Council have also lodged an objection to this, as well as to several small sites in Southwell near to the Business Park.

### **MAJOR PROPOSALS AROUND PORTLAND HARBOUR**

Two significant development proposals are for sites at the opposite ends of the Portland Harbour breakwater.

#### **Castletown, Portland (WP/20/00692/DCC)**

At the Portland end, the highly controversial application for an incinerator, to which we and countless others strongly objected, is still undecided at the time of writing.

## **Bingleaves, Weymouth**

At the Weymouth end of the breakwater the low-lying spit of reclaimed land at Bingleaves is about to be the subject of a further planning application for a massive development. This would replace the previous complex for a Care Village totalling nearly 300 units and rooms, which gained planning permission in 2016 but did not materialise (WP/15/00833/FUL). The new proposals, heralded by the developers in 2021 and reported in the Echo on 4<sup>th</sup> December, are to include 184 apartments, an 80 bedroom hotel, a 65-bed care home, seven houses, and other uses, in a dense cluster of blocks rising to seven storeys.



*Newton's Cove, towards Bingleaves*

## **LIAISON WITH LOCAL COUNCILS**

We have been very pleased to have made good contacts with the three local Councils which cover the Society's area of interest – that is, Weymouth, Portland and Chickerell Town Councils. Weymouth and Portland Councils have lent us invaluable help in directly accessing information on Dorset Council's website. This has enabled us to get straight to the details of each application, bypassing the difficult and long-winded route through the website - assistance for which we are extremely grateful.

## **CONSERVATION**

In early December members of the Planning and Environment Committee hosted Dorset Council Conservation Officers at a meeting in the Nothe Fort. We had a useful discussion, highlighting some historic buildings in Weymouth and Portland which are in poor, neglected and deteriorating condition. These included Brewers Quay in particular, the Old Assembly Rooms in Trinity Street, the former Meech's menswear shop in St Mary Street, the former Swan Inn on Dorchester Road in Broadway, a building in Gloucester Mews; and on Portland in Castletown, two late Victorian buildings plus the derelict former Naval Accommodation Block, which, while not historic, is a horrendous blight on the Conservation Area there.



*Brewers' Quay*



*Derelict Naval block*

The Conservation Officers stressed what limited powers the Council has to solve these problems, and the lack of resources to do so, which severely restricts their ability to bring about major improvements. We were pleased, though, to hear that the Council plans to update Conservation Area Appraisals, and to draw up Local Lists of buildings which though not statutorily listed are of value as local 'Heritage Assets'. For this they would like local people such as our Society members, who have a wide ranging basis of local knowledge, to assist them by suggesting buildings worthy of inclusion – an invitation which we hope to take up in the coming months.

Members are welcome to send in their comments on any topic for our consideration – email: [planning@weymouthcivicsociety.org](mailto:planning@weymouthcivicsociety.org), or write to the Planning Committee Secretary at 71 Roman Road, Weymouth, DT3 5JH.