



PORTLAND INCINERATOR

These recent months saw a massive amount of correspondence on this most controversial topic of the proposed incinerator for a site at Portland Port in Castletown. We wrote in objection to it, citing three main points of concern from planning aspects, described in the October/November News. This will need wide-ranging investigation by the Council, and as yet there is no outcome.



Both Portland and Weymouth Town Councils have objected on broadly similar grounds to our own – heavy traffic generation, environment, inappropriate location for the facility, visual, and effect on tourism and sport, among others.

OUR WORK AS A COMMITTEE

In the work of the Committee we take up matters on a range of topics from time to time on behalf of the Society, where we see the need. Now and then major planning issues arise in the local area, one such being the proposed incinerator above, another the forthcoming public consultation on the next Local Plan - this time for the whole Dorset Council area. In contrast, the regular bread-and-butter of our Committee's concern is the day-to-day monitoring of planning applications, of which there are up to 1,000 each year in the whole local area. The vast majority of these we find broadly acceptable, or else there are only neighbour-related issues, so we do not take any action.

In the relatively few cases where we see problems, around three to five in each month, we offer our views to the Council. By responding in this way, we are in at the earliest opportunity given to the public to air our concerns, in the hope that any unsuitable proposals may be improved or prevented. This being the case, our News tends to be largely based around the problem developments, rather than the majority acceptable ones.

CURRENT PLANS

FERRYBRIDGE BOATYARD

This site on the Portland Beach Road is the subject of two planning applications, which together would totally change its appearance. At Billy Winters there is a third attempt, following two refusals, to gain permission for an upper storey made of shipping containers, placed on top of the current portacabin. At the same time there is a major proposal to demolish the cluster of structures of Ferrybridge Marine next to it, and replace it with a building of five times the internal floor area, housing boatyard uses and the Crossfit gym.

While we support the maritime use of this site, bordering Portland Harbour, and the removal of the unlovely group of structures, we are concerned at the sheer extra size and dominance of the proposed building, which would be sited in the most prominent position, absolutely adjacent to Portland Beach Road.

PROPOSALS ON HAMM BEACH ROAD, PORTLAND – STARBUCKS AND 9 BUSINESS UNITS



A proposed Starbucks drive-through restaurant close to the first roundabout on the Portland Beach Road has caused some controversy, with opinions for and against it.

We have no objection to the provision of a Starbucks as such, but have some concerns about its siting in such an

important location which in effect forms a gateway to Portland, and the proposed position on the piece of grassy ground close to the roundabout that gives a setting to the other nearby uses. We also note other potential problems that have been aired – the risk that the buildings could affect wind conditions for the important centre for wind surfing and other related sports; the close proximity to the Hamm Beach grasslands of international ecological significance; and the potential for traffic problems at this location close to the busy roundabout.

CAMPERVANS – NEW GROUND, PORTLAND

There is an application for a 20-pitch campervan site at New Ground on Portland, on the same piece of ground where a proposal for 20 touring caravan pitches was refused and dismissed on appeal in 2016. This is the area at the top of the island, where visitors from all over the world come to enjoy the magnificent views, and the site in question is part of the wide open grassland that stretches away southwards towards the ancient quarries, designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. In our view this is not the right location, in such a prominent place, and we fear that if permitted, it could set a precedent for yet more encroachment on to this open space, where a cafe has already been permitted.

WATERSIDE HOLIDAY PARK – PROPOSED EXTENSION

Over many years we have seen gradual encroachment of caravans and similar uses over the valley east of Preston. Now a very large extension is proposed, a significant incursion into the open grassy fields, and highly visible from the Coast Path. The plans show 31 ‘lodges’ and 25 ‘pods’, and



a car park in another field. While the details of the structures seem reasonable, with cedar cladding and green/sedum roofs, the report acknowledges that these ‘technically comprise

caravans’, and it is therefore important that any permission should be very closely tied to exact layout, design of ‘caravan’, and detailed landscaping of the site.

We appreciate the popularity of this type of accommodation but have

written with our concerns about this location in particular, and have emphasised that, should planning permission be granted, it would need to be ensured that the type of accommodation is not to be varied from the approved scheme.

LAND BY THE A353, OSMINGTON HILL (NORTHDOWN FARM)

We have written with our concerns about a proposal to create a retail business and car park half way up Osmington Hill, on the open land north of the road, by an existing track. This would provide a viewpoint for the White Horse, and also a farm shop with snacks and beverages, with four polytunnels further east, using another existing access. Our worries are that this would be a sizeable development altogether, introducing a commercial use into the open countryside in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and potentially generating a considerable amount of additional traffic and turning movements on this already busy main road.

ILLUMINATED ADVERTISING BOARDS



We have objected strongly to two separate proposals for illuminated digital displays on existing advertisement hoardings. One is on Abbotsbury Road next to the Rodwell Trail; the other on Portland

Road on the wall of one of the three terraces of Ferrybridge Cottages, which are of some historic value, being the original workers' accommodation for the important Whitehead's Torpedo Works of 1891.

Although static, the Abbotsbury Road display would change frequently – up to every 10 seconds. These huge illuminated displays on the hoardings would be not only out of place in their locality but also, importantly, a potential hazard to drivers. Indeed, we have gone a step further, with the

suggestion that the existing hoardings might be removed altogether and the sites restored.

OUTCOMES

DENSE DEVELOPMENT

There is a constant pressure to build on what seem to be ever smaller pieces of land, often in back gardens. Even on larger plots there is a tendency to build as much as the site can possibly take, often with resultant lowering of parking provision and amenity space. The following, upon which we commented, have all been decided by the Council: -

16 Goldcroft Road – a bungalow proposed on a tiny piece of land in a back garden, with access on to a rough lane or track between the houses, now refused by the Council.

Scrap Metal Yard, Upway Street - proposed housing in a small space tucked behind King Street and Commercial Road properties - a second attempt to gain permission, reduced from six to four dwellings, both now refused.

375 Dorchester Road – North Lodge of Corfe Hill House - We objected to a proposal to demolish a house on Dorchester Road opposite the petrol station and build six houses in its place. We considered this overdevelopment, highlighting the poor access at an awkward pinch point on Dorchester Road. Probably unknown to most people, the present house includes the original small lodge for Corfe Hill House, of about 1837, which we drew to the Council's notice. Their Planning Committee debated this issue, but in the end approved it.

LAND NORTH OF LITTLEMOOR ROAD – MIXED USE WITH UP TO 500 DWELLINGS

This major development has finally gained approval by the Council, with the provision of 35% affordable housing still to be finalised by a legal agreement. It was allocated for mixed uses in the 2015 Local Plan, so the principle of development was already set when the application was submitted in 2016.

We expressed serious concerns about the severance of this large residential development from the existing housing area of Littlemoor with its shopping centre and facilities, as well as the number of pedestrian crossings that would be needed, disrupting the traffic flow on Littlemoor Road, a major route into and around Weymouth. Our concerns also include the potential for large-scale out-of-town shopping development in the part of the site marked out for retail/employment, which could harm the viability of both Weymouth town centre shops and the Littlemoor shopping centre.

PROPOSED 66 BEDROOM CARE HOME, RADIPOLE LANE

In contrast to the four years which were taken for the Littlemoor extension application to gain approval, planning permission for this major proposal for a care home has been granted in just under three months from its 'validation'. While supporting the provision of a care home in general terms, we think



that the location proposed, in a meadow east of the police station, is too isolated and distant from facilities and public transport.

There are also questions regarding parking provision and the access for both vehicles and pedestrians on to this through route near the football stadium, which can generate considerable traffic and parking. We also think that the long and bulky three-storey building will be an intrusive presence in the landscape, though at least the hedge along the frontage is to be kept.

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH SITE, BUXTON ROAD - 18 FLATS There was considerable local opposition to this proposal to demolish the church and build a block of 18 flats. While this would have the benefit of providing affordable homes, we had concerns about the high number of flats for

this limited space, and the fact that the modern design would be out of keeping with the fine Victorian villas which create the special character of the Conservation Area. It was supported by the Council on the understanding of 100% affordable homes, and though that cannot now be implemented by the method intended, the developers Sovereign have undertaken to make that provision by other means.



ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE, 45 DORCHESTER ROAD – PROPOSED CHILDREN’S HOME



The proposal for this large house to become a Children’s Home has now been approved by the Council. We supported this use, and also the demolition of the old annex building.

But we are very concerned at the modular form of the proposed new building

alongside it, clad in ‘rainscreen’ panelling, which we feel is entirely unsuitable here in the Conservation Area, with the group of handsome villas, and the fine building of the old Weymouth College and its chapel opposite.

LAND NORTH OF LORTON LANE, BY DORCHESTER ROAD – PLANNING APPEAL

This is another outcome which has gone against what we hoped for, and in this case against the Council's decision to refuse. The proposal for nine houses on part of the small field or paddock on the east side of Dorchester Road in Broadway has been allowed by the Inspector, and planning permission granted. This is part



of the last remaining open gap on the whole built-up route, a well-loved little field, and its development will further urbanise this green lung.

WEYMOUTH FOOTBALL STADIUM, RADIPOLE LANE – PROPOSED HOUSING

The progress of the major housing site planned to replace the football stadium has hit another obstacle – the application for the detailed layout has been dismissed by a Planning Inspector on appeal. We had originally objected to the loss of the stadium, but outline permission was granted. Our main concerns about the details are in relation to the access, and the rather solid line of four blocks of flats running fairly close to the Chickerell Link Road, where there could have been an opportunity for a less heavily urban appearance near the road. The Inspector gave one reason only for dismissing this appeal and another related appeal – problems with the layout of the site for the ‘permeability of pedestrians’ and for cyclists. The big factor remaining is of course the continued existence of the football stadium in the absence of an alternative site.

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