



POUNDBURY, DORCHESTER
PHASES 3 & 4



STATEMENT
OF
COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

August 2009

Cover: Aerial photograph by Roger D Smith ABIPP, Gosport, October 2007

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Poundbury Development Phase 3&4

Statement of Countryside Access

The Poundbury Development Brief

The Poundbury Development Brief broadly sets out objectives for improved access to the countryside as follows:

1. A safer route to gain access to the public rights of way network to the south of the A35, avoiding use of the surface crossing of the A35 (Footpath No. 46).
2. The use of the existing agricultural underpass beneath the A35 Dorchester Bypass as a public right of way to gain access to the public rights of way network to the south of the A35. Reference is made to the need to minimise any adverse effect on the use of the land (to the south of the A35) for keeping livestock, particularly sheep grazing.
3. The use of the existing agricultural underpass beneath the A37 Dorchester Western Bypass as a public right of way to gain access to the countryside to the west, in conjunction with the final phase of the Poundbury development.
4. The need to manage access to prevent further degradation of Poundbury Hillfort.

Figure 10 of the Poundbury Development Brief indicates possible points of access to the wider countryside.

Access to the Countryside South of A35 Dorchester Bypass

The following text should be read in conjunction with Fig 1, which shows the network of paths and bridleways in the vicinity of Poundbury, and Appendices 1 & 2 which include correspondence with Poundbury Pathfinders and the Ramblers Association.

The existing footpath crossing of the A35 (point N on Fig 1) is considered unsafe from a traffic point of view. The footpath C-N has been diverted on a number of occasions to enable various sections of the development of Phase 2 to take place. On completion of Phase 2 the footpath C-N would have ordinarily been routed over the adopted highway north of Middle Farm Way. South of Middle Farm Way the footpath will be routed up the noise abatement embankment.

As suggested in the Poundbury Development Brief, a bridge has been considered to carry the footpath over the A35 at this point, but has been discounted for the following reasons:

1. With the steep approach over the noise bund, footpath users would more likely opt for the easier route through the underpass which is in very close proximity and would benefit from the use of the Toucan Crossing over Middle Farm Way at Victor Jackson Avenue.
2. To accommodate ramps or steps would intrude into the field, more than the farmer is prepared to tolerate.
3. A new bridge would be an intrusion into the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
4. A bridge would not provide a value for money option, given the small number of people anticipated to use this facility.

Numerous and extended discussions have taken place with the tenant farmer, his agent and the Duchy Land Steward. As a result the following measures are proposed for implementation. Under the terms of the lease additional measures cannot be forced on the tenant farmer. The following proposals have his agreement:

1. The track running south from the A35 underpass (A-B on Fig 1) is a main access for farming purposes and is used regularly by machinery and livestock.

This track will not be proposed as an alternative right of way for the following reasons which could have a serious affect on the tenant's farming practices:

- a) Health & safety of users arising from conflict with driven animals and farm machinery.
- b) Additional access routes would increase the incidents of interference and injury to livestock and deliberate damage to fencing due to the increasing number of people gaining access to the area (Appendix 1).
- c) The terms of the tenancy agreement preclude the Duchy of Cornwall being able to insist that the farmer allows use of the track running south from the A35 underpass.
- d) Alternative access to Maiden Castle Road is available at Point G which is served by two paths (G&H) shown in the Poundbury Development Brief together with an additional permissive path (J).
- e) The tenant farmer, Mr. John Hoskins, made a comprehensive response during the consultation period on the Draft Poundbury Development Brief. It appears that no aspects of the response were incorporated into the Development Brief.

2. The agricultural underpass beneath the A35 (point A on Fig 1) will be opened as a public right of way shared with agricultural use.
3. A public right of way will be established from Middle Farm Way, south to point K, while the footpath N-D will be diverted to a route K-L-M. Should the route L-M not find favour, then K-L-N is proposed.

These proposals are not materially different to those shown at the public exhibition in April 2008 and it is worth noting that no representations were received from the Ramblers until March 2009.

Consultation

A letter dated the 20th May 2008 from Poundbury Pathfinders (Appendix 3) is broadly in support of opening up the A35 underpass and supports a diversion of the footpath N-D. The concern regarding connection to a public highway has been addressed.

A series of letters from the Ramblers (Appendix 2) dated 26 March 2009, 27 April 2009, 10 July 2009 and 29 July 2009) together with responses from The Duchy of Cornwall indicate:

The Ramblers will not support diversion of Footpath ND on the grounds of:

- a) Wishing to retain the right of way, notwithstanding the accepted danger in crossing the A35.
- b) Unpleasant and circuitous alternative K-L-M or K-L-N

A meeting with representatives of the Ramblers was held on the 20th of July 2009 to discuss possible ways forward. A summary of the outcome is as follows:

- a) The representatives seemed prepared to support an alternative route for Footpath N-D to do away with the need to cross the A35.
- b) The representatives would report back to the Committee the Duchy proposals to be included in the planning application. The letters expressed concern about the lack of pedestrian facilities along Maiden Castle Road. The Duchy of Cornwall offered to investigate the possibility of donating a strip of land to enable a footway/cycleway to be constructed if this would help reach a satisfactory compromise solution.

A subsequent letter dated the 10th of August 2009 and subsequent response (Appendix 2) indicates no compromise solution has been arrived at. Exchange of correspondence is on-going.

For additional information, letters from WDDC to the Ramblers, Councillor D. Barrett and Councillor Trevor Jones are included in Appendix 4.

Access to Countryside West of A37 Dorchester Western Bypass

The Poundbury Development Brief (PDB) called for a safe access under the A37 using the existing agricultural underpass in conjunction with the final phase of the development.

The Duchy of Cornwall proposes a dedicated right of way from the adoptable highway to the east of the A37 through the underpass (R-E).

To enable this proposal to be put into operation new stock handling facilities will need to be constructed to the west of the A37.

Notwithstanding the intention outlined at the public exhibition and implied intentions in the PDB, it is proposed that this right of way will be available within two years of the grant of outline planning permission. It will of necessity be a shared use with agricultural purposes. In the short term there maybe a need for a temporary diversion of the route E-R during construction of Phase 4 of the development.

Interpretation of Fig. 10 in the PDB seems to indicate a right of way from Q westwards. A dedicated right of way already exists from Point P westwards linking into bridleway T-E-S. A right of way is therefore not being proposed from Q westwards.

Consultation

The above proposals would appear to fulfil the wishes expressed in the correspondence from the Poundbury Pathfinders (Appendix 3) and Ramblers Association (Appendix 2).

Pedestrian Access to Poundbury Road & Hillfort

In July 2009, Dorset County Council Rights of Way Section installed a number of mobility kissing gates complying with Disability Discrimination Act 2005 Guidelines, to give improved access to the Hillfort area in general.

The layout at the entrance from Poundbury Road into the development will need minor modifications during construction of the entrance works in say ten years time.

The Archaeological Management Plan (see Supporting Document) details how the management of the area will be implemented.

Prior to further access improvement works to the Hillfort, The Great Field will be completed to provide recreation areas for the increasing number of people living in Poundbury, thus minimising the need for increased use of the Hillfort area for recreation.

The current access to and accessibility of the Hillfort area will therefore remain as existing for say the next ten years.

Consultation

Letters dated the 20th of May 2008 from the Poundbury Pathfinders (Appendix 3) suggest a footpath link from the Poundbury development. This will be provided at Point F.

Conclusion

It is considered that with the exception of alternative proposals for access to the south of the A35 the requirements for access to the surrounding countryside as detailed in the Poundbury Development Brief will be delivered by these proposals.

The Duchy of Cornwall will be represented at the next meeting of the Dorset Local Access Forum Poundbury Working Group.

