

Environmental Statement - Vol 1: Main Text

Knoll House Hotel, Ferry Road, Studland

Prepared by Black Box Planning
on behalf of Kingfisher Resorts Studland Ltd



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Quality Assurance

This report has been prepared in accordance with the quality assurance procedures operated by Black Box Planning Ltd	
Created by:	Jane Fuller MRTPI
Signature:	
Checked by:	Ben Read MRTPI
Signature:	

1. Introduction

Purpose of Environmental Statement

- 1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on behalf of Kingfisher Resorts (The Applicant) in support of a Full planning application for the redevelopment of Knoll House Hotel, Ferry Road, Studland.
- 1.2 The submission of this fresh application follows the refusal of a previous application (dated 9th February 2022) submitted in November 2018 (application ref. 6/2018/0566). The applicant has appointed a new design team to prepare fresh proposals for the Site in response to the issues raised by the Council and key consultees. As such this ES comprises the results of fresh assessment work on the new proposals. It has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations').
- 1.3 The area of land subject to this application extends to approximately 2 hectares and is identified on the plan entitled 'Site Location Plan' submitted with the application. The proposed masterplan is included within the Design and Access Statement and accompanying architectural plans pack.
- 1.4 The proposed development is summarised below within Chapter 4 below. The proposal is hereafter referred to as 'the proposed development' within this document.
- 1.5 In summary, this full planning application seeks permission for the following:
 - 30 hotel rooms
 - 22 apartments
 - 26 villas
 - 79 parking spaces
 - 36 cycle spaces
 - Restaurant and spa complex including indoor/outdoor pool
 - Associated landscaping, public realm, biodiversity enhancements, drainage, access and servicing infrastructure.
- 1.6 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been compiled by Black Box Planning (BBP) with the assessments of each environmental feature undertaken by a team of specialists summarised within Table 1.1 below.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.7 The requirement for EIA is derived from the EC Directive no. 2011/92/EU. This directive is transposed into UK law through the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (“the Regulations”). The Regulations require that prior to the grant of planning permission the likely significant effects of a project on the environment should be assessed. This ES has been prepared in accordance with the Regulations.
- 1.8 The Regulations set out the types of development which will always be subject to EIA under Schedule 1 and other developments which may require EIA under Schedule 2. The application proposals fall under Schedule 2 of the Regulations, specifically category 12 (c) Tourism and Leisure and exceed the 0.5ha threshold for screening. A request for Screening and Scoping Opinion was submitted with the previous application and the Council subsequently adopted an opinion (dated 14th September 2018) confirming that the proposals are to be considered EIA development.
- 1.9 The EIA process has sought to identify appropriate construction and operational phase design and good practice mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse effects and to maximise beneficial effects. The outcome of the EIA process is to determine the nature of any residual significant effects once the mitigation measures have been factored in. The summary of the findings is provided within Chapter 8 of this report and summarised within the stand alone Non-Technical Summary that accompanies this report.

The EIA Team

- 1.10 Regulation 18(5) of the EIA Regulations requires the developer to ensure that the ES is prepared by competent experts and that the ES must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.
- 1.11 The applicant’s EIA team and their relevant professional expertise are set out within Table 1.1 below. All of the EIA team members have contributed to the preparation of this EIA Scoping Report.

Table 1.1: The Applicant’s EIA Team

Name and Title	Organisation	EIA Role	Qualifications
Ben Read, Director	Black Box Planning	EIA Project Director	MRTPI
Jane Fuller, Associate	Black Box Planning	Socioeconomics assessment	MRTPI GradIEMA
Richard Sneesby, Director	Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects	Landscape Assessment	FLI
Dominic Farmer, Director	Ecology Solutions	Ecology Assessment	MCIEEM CEnv

Structure of the Environmental Statement

1.12 This ES is structured as follows:

- **Volume 1 – Main Text (this report):**
 - **Chapter 1: Introduction** - introduces the content, purpose and format of the ES.
 - **Chapter 2: Assessment Methodology** - summarises the scope of the assessment and assessment methodology used.
 - **Chapter 3: Site and Surrounding area** – description of site context and location.
 - **Chapter 4: The Proposed development and Alternatives** – summarises the proposed development and the alternatives considered.
 - **Chapter 5: Socio-economic Effects** - summarises the socio-economic assessment and provides a summary of any proposed mitigation/enhancement measures.
 - **Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Effects** - summarises the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and provides a summary of proposed mitigation/enhancement measures.
 - **Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation** - summarises the ecology assessment and provides a summary of proposed mitigation/enhancement measures.
 - **Chapter 8: Summary of Effects** – provides a summary of the overall findings and conclusions of the EIA.
- **Volume 2 – Figures and Technical Appendices** – the technical appendices that support the three topic assessments. For continuity and ease of reference, all tables, figures and appendices are presented under the same numbering system as their respective chapters.
- **Non-Technical Summary** - A Non-technical summary of the ES has been produced as a freestanding document, which provides a concise summary of findings in non-technical language.

Consultation on the Environmental Statement

1.13 This ES will be consulted on alongside the package of planning application documents. Any comments on the ES should be directed to Dorset Council (“The Council”) through commenting on the planning application. The details of where the ES can be viewed will be available from the Council’s development management department who can be contacted as follows:

- Telephone: 01305 838336
- Email: planningeast@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Environmental Statement – Main Text

Knoll House Hotel, Ferry Road, Studland

- Printed copies of this report and/or electronic CD copies of this ES are also available from the agent of the application at the following cost:
 - ES Main Text - [REDACTED]
 - Technical Appendices - [REDACTED]
 - Non-Technical Summary – [REDACTED]e
 - Digital copies of the above on a CD - [REDACTED]
- For copies of any of the above please contact the application agent, Black Box Planning, at the following address:

Black Box Planning Ltd (Knoll House Hotel)
36 King Street
Bristol
BS1 4DZ

2. Assessment Methodology

- 2.1 The ES has been prepared by a team of competent specialist consultants in accordance with the EIA Regulations. The assessment process has been informed by consultation with the relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees. Current EIA best practice guidance for each of the environmental features assessed has been employed. Established and tested techniques have been used wherever possible.
- 2.2 The EIA Regulations (2017) set out the procedures for undertaking an EIA and the information which is required to be provided within an ES.

The EIA Process

- 2.3 In general terms the main stages in undertaking the EIA are as follows:
- Screening – determining the need for an EIA
 - Scoping – identifying the significant issues, defining the scope of the EIA
 - Data review – collating and reviewing available data
 - Baseline surveys – undertaking and updating baseline surveys
 - Assessment and Iteration – assessment of the likely significant effects, evaluation of the reasonable alternatives, providing iterative feedback to the design team on potential adverse impacts, modification of the proposals accordingly, incorporation of mitigation and enhancement measures, assessment of the effects of the mitigated development.
- 2.4 This ES has been prepared in accordance Regulation 18 (3) which states that an ES is a statement which includes at least the following:
- (a) a description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;*
- (b) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment;*
- (c) a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;*
- (d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment;*
- (e) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d); and*

(f) any additional information specified in Schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected.

Screening and Scoping

2.5 A request for Screening and Scoping Opinion was submitted with the previous application (dated June 2018) and the Council subsequently adopted an opinion (dated 14th September 2018) confirming that the proposals are to be considered EIA development and setting out the required scope of the assessment. The opinion confirmed that the following topics should be assessed:

- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Biodiversity and Ecology
- Socioeconomic considerations

2.6 In determining the previous full application (February 2022), the planning authority did not raise the need to scope in any additional topics to be assessed beyond those originally scoped in. Given that the nature of the application is substantively similar to the previous one, this fresh assessment has continued to include the previously agreed topics, updated where appropriate.

Assessment Assumptions

2.7 The following assumptions have been used to ensure that the EIA has identified the likely significant effects of the proposed development (unless otherwise specified in each of the technical chapters):

- The assessment has been based on the proposed masterplan and plans pack that accompanies the planning application.
- Baseline conditions are generally considered to be the current conditions at the site and surrounding area, unless materially affected by the other reasonably foreseeable developments.
- Any specific assumptions or uncertainties relevant to the preparation of this ES are noted in each of the technical chapters as appropriate

Assessing Effects

2.8 The detailed methodology for determining the significance of the identified effects is set out within each of the technical chapters. In general terms, the significance of environmental effects typically represents the correlation or function of two factors:

- The sensitivity, importance or value of the existing environmental conditions which would be affected by the proposed development. The existing environmental conditions are referred to as the 'receptors'; and

- The extent of the likely physical changes to the environment attributable to either the construction or operational phase of the proposed development. This is referred to as the ‘magnitude’ of the effect.

2.9 Each of the three technical ES chapters has identified the likely receptors relevant to that environmental feature and has assessed their sensitivity. These have been identified through the baseline studies.

2.10 In terms of the magnitude of effects, these have been assessed against established scales relevant to each discipline wherever possible as set out within each chapter. In some cases, the effects can be quantifiable and as such the effect can be clearly defined. However, in some cases it is not possible to quantify impacts and therefore qualitative assessments need to be carried out, based on available knowledge and professional judgement.

2.11 The spatial and temporal boundaries for predicting and assessing the impacts have been defined within each of the technical chapters. The intended build programme as far as is known at the time of writing has been factored into the analysis of the construction and operational phase impacts.

2.12 The significance of each identified effect has been assessed, taking account of and comparing the outcomes of the established ‘sensitivity of the receptor’ and the estimated ‘magnitude of change’ caused by the effect of the proposed development upon that receptor. The most significant effects take place where a highly valuable, important, or sensitive receptor is predicted to be impacted by a large magnitude of change. On the contrary, where a receptor is assessed as having low or negligible value and with a minor or negligible magnitude of effect, then the likely significance will be lesser. To ensure a broadly consistent environmental assessment process within the individual technical ES Chapters, a significance matrix table has been deployed similar to that shown in Table 2.1 below. However, this will be adjusted as appropriate for the particular topic discipline within each of the technical chapters.

Table 2.1: Generic example of Significance of Effects Assessment Matrix

Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity of Receptor				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High		Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium		Major	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
Low		Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Negligible		Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

2.13 In describing an effect, consideration will be given to the sensitivity of the receptor, the magnitude of change, nature of effect, geographical scale, duration of effect. An anticipated effect can be described as being:

- Adverse: Detrimental or negative impacts to an environmental resource or receptor;
- Beneficial: Advantageous or positive impacts to an environmental resource or receptor;
- Negligible/Neutral: No significant impacts to an environmental resource or receptor having regards to other effects also.

Mitigation and Enhancement

2.14 Where minor, moderate or major adverse effects are predicted, either during the construction or operational phases of the proposed development, mitigation measures will be explored and agreed with the Council wherever possible. Wherever practical and viable to do so these measures can be used to reduce the predicted impacts to acceptable levels or to avoid impacts altogether. The predicted residual impacts after any mitigation have been applied, will then be re-examined against the established significance criteria scale. The significance of any residual effects, after mitigation, are then summarised in the tables at the end of each chapter.

Cumulative and In-Combination Effects

2.15 The EIA is required to take account of possible cumulative effects that may arise from the development in combination with other developments coming on stream over a similar time period within the vicinity of the site. Cumulative sites typically include:

- Major schemes with a resolution to grant planning permission;
- Major schemes with a valid planning permission but yet to start on-site;
- Major schemes with a valid planning permission and under construction;
- Any other allocated and draft allocated sites for further consideration.

2.16 Where applicable, any potential cumulative effects identified for each of the specific ES topics will be summarised within each chapter. These will include both in-combination effects arising from the interaction of effects between the different assessment topics within the project itself as well effects arising from the project combined with other local developments coming forward.

3. Site and Surroundings

Site and Location

- 3.1 The land being assessed through this EIA process currently consists of a brownfield site comprising of the existing Knoll House Hotel and its associated facilities, landscaping and car parking areas. For the purposes of testing the likely significant environmental effects, this ES has examined an area of land totalling approximately 2 hectares in extent and is shown on the submitted Site Location Plan as well as considering off-site impacts on surrounding areas.
- 3.2 The application site comprises Knoll House, which was built in the early 1900s and subsequently became a small country hotel in 1931. During the Second World War the hotel was requisitioned for troops erecting beach defences and following the war the hotel reopened in 1946.
- 3.3 There are currently approximately 30 buildings on the site including the main hotel building, additional staff accommodation, an indoor swimming pool and storage sheds, in addition to a significant amount of hardstanding which make up the site access and car parking area. The footprint of the existing buildings on site is approximately 4,763 metres squared, with approximately 7,500 metres squared of hardstanding and approximately 4,600 metres squared of soft landscaping.
- 3.4 As existing, the hotel has 163 accommodation units, or keys, on site. This comprises 106 hotel rooms for guests and 57 accommodation units for employees of the hotel.
- 3.5 The hotel and grounds lay to the west of Ferry Road, which connects the village to Studland to Studland Beach and the shell Bay ferry terminal 2.5 miles to the north.
- 3.6 The site is immediately bordered to the east by the B3351 Ferry Road, with land associated with the hotel beyond, accommodating an informal golf course, tennis courts and space for informal recreation. To the immediate south are open fields and to the west and north are heavily wooded areas. These areas are held on a long-term lease from the National Trust, the boundaries of which are shown on the Site Location Plan.

Existing Use

- 3.7 Currently, the hotel comprises of 106 guest bedrooms alongside ancillary facilities such as an indoor and outdoor pool and restaurant. These facilities are primarily used by guests and use of these facilities by non-guests has not typically been encouraged.
- 3.8 Traditionally, prior to Kingfishers acquisition in 2018, the hotel operated seasonally, closing for a period in the winter. However, it has operated on a year round basis since then. Staff have been predominantly employed on a contract basis, arriving when the hotel opened and leaving the area again on a seasonal basis. This necessitated the provision of 57 on-site staff accommodation units, in addition to the 106 hotel rooms for guests and equating to 163 rooms in total. Individually, rooms

comprise a range of bed spaces (singles, twins, doubles and triples). An overview of the existing and proposed occupancy capacities is set out within the Planning Statement accompanying this application.

Access and Parking

- 3.9 The car parking spaces currently provided on site are informal and unmarked. Vehicles at present utilise gravelled areas to the west and block paved areas near to the existing buildings. It has been estimated that the existing parking areas would allow 86 vehicles to be parked within the whole site. Parking has been estimated using a topographical survey of the existing site, assuming spaces measure 2.4m x 4.8m with a 6m clearance.
- 3.10 The existing main site vehicular access is taken from Ferry Road.

Ecology and Landscape Designations

- 3.11 The site and the whole of the Southern part of Purbeck is within the designated Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site is located in close proximity to Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site (also designated as Studland & Godlingston Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Dorset Heath and Studland Dunes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Poole Harbour SPA / Ramsar / Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 3.12 The landscape surrounding the site was considered vulnerable to invasion during the Second World War opposite the site are Grade II listed pillboxes. Two bowl barrows designated as Scheduled Monuments occupy land to the south of the development site. Although not on the register of Heritage at Risk, they are recorded as vulnerable to erosion and loss.
- 3.13 An oak tree on the site and pines along the roadside frontage are protected with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Heritage

- 3.14 The site lies within the Purbeck Heritage Coast and is in close proximity to the designated UNESCO world heritage site Dorset and Devon Jurassic Coast (Natural site December 2021).
- 3.1 As of 11th April 2018, Historic England considered that Knoll House Hotel is not recommended for formal listing due to the principal reasons of the low level of historical and architectural interest. Despite not being listed, it is recognised that the hotel makes a contribution to the local character and cultural history of the area.

Topography

- 3.2 The site is at a local high point at about 25m AOD, with the ground dipping in all directions. The crest of the hill is at the southwest of the site at above 30m AOD, with the steepest slope towards the north-west. The gradient is lowest towards the south.

Flood Risk

3.3 There is no risk of flooding from the sea in the area, and no fluvial flooding anticipated within the redline boundary. The site is classified as lying wholly within Flood Zone 1 (having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any given year) at the lowest risk of flooding.

Surrounding Location

3.4 The land being assessed as part of the ES is located 500 metres to the north of Studland village. The town of Swanage is approximately 1.8 miles to the south.

3.5 Studland is a village and civil parish on the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset, with a population of approximately 375 people¹. Many of the houses in the village are holiday homes, second homes, or guest houses, and the village population varies depending upon the season.

3.6 Swanage is a coastal town, located at the eastern end of the Isle of Purbeck and has a population of approximately 9,750².

3.7 The town is a popular tourist resort, this being the town's primary industry. Swanage's other principal sources of employment are wholesale and retail trade (including mechanics), health and social work, and accommodation and food service activities. The town centre has a small number medium-sized outlets for major retailers, a collection of local retailers, a number of cafes, bars, restaurants and pubs.

Planning History

3.8 Initially established in 1931, the hotel has been extensively developed over the years with buildings of various architectural styles and appearance. Historic planning applications submitted to redevelop the site include the following:

- In February 2022, planning permission (application reference 6/2018/0566) was refused for redevelopment of the existing hotel to provide new tourist accommodation including a 30 bedroom hotel, apartments & villa accommodation, associated leisure & dining facilities;
- In February 1990, planning permission (application reference: 6/1989/1133F) was granted to erect a first floor extension to provide staff accommodation;
- In July 1987 planning permission (application reference: 6/87/402F) was granted to demolish the existing staff accommodation and erect a new building to accommodate permanent and temporary staff; and,

¹ ONS - 2016 Parish Level Mid-Year Estimates

² ONS - 2016 Parish Level Mid-Year Estimates

- In October 1984 planning permission (application reference: 6/84/737F) was granted to erect a new detached health spa to the south of the main hotel building.

Planning Policy Context

- 3.9 The following section sets out a high level summary of the key planning policy documents that are relevant to this ES and to the proposed redevelopment of Knoll House Hotel. A detailed analysis of the planning policy context is provided within the Planning Statement that accompanies this application.
- 3.10 In terms of significant environmental designations, it should be noted that the area proposed for development does not include land that is located within the South East Dorset Green Belt. The ecological designations within close proximity of the application site are the Dorset Heathland Ramsar Site, the Studland and Godlingston Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Dorset Heaths and Studland Dunes Special Area of Conservations (SAC), Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA). The site is also located within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 3.11 There are no designated heritage assets on the site itself. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and the Environmental Agency flood maps confirm that the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not considered to be at a significant risk from flooding.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 3.12 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, last updated July 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF promotes sustainable development and requires local authorities to take a positive approach towards development. The relevant policies from the NPPF that relate to each of the technical assessments have been set out within the policy context section of each chapter.
- 3.13 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At present, the adopted Development Plan comprises the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1: Planning Purbeck's Future (PLP1) (adopted in November 2012) and the Purbeck Local Plan Proposals Maps.

Adopted Purbeck Local Plan Part 1: Planning Purbeck's Future (PLP1) (2012)

- 3.14 The Purbeck Local Plan was formally adopted on 13 November 2012. *Policy SD: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development* is an overarching policy within the Plan supporting sustainable development in line with the NPPF.
- 3.15 The following adopted planning policies are of particular relevance in assessing this application:
- Policy SD: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- Policy LD: General Location of Development
- Policy SE: South East Purbeck
- Policy CO: Countryside
- Policy D: Design
- Policy BIO: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy DH: Dorset Heaths International Designations
- Policy PH: Poole Harbour
- Policy LHH: Landscape, Historic Environment and Heritage
- Policy TA: Tourist Accommodation and Attractions
- Policy IAT: Improving Accessibility and Transport

Emerging Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034

3.16 The replacement Purbeck Local Plan was submitted for examination in January 2019. An examination in public took place in 2019 followed by consultation on proposed Main Modifications between December 2020 and January 2021. Consultation on Further Proposed Main Modifications took place during October 2021. An additional hearing session took place in July 2022 followed by various correspondence in relation to housing need and nutrient pollution matters throughout 2022.

3.17 Taking account of Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework, local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater weight that may be given). As such, at the time of determining this application, policies within the new Local Plan may potentially be either adopted or be at a very advanced stage and as such weight will be afforded accordingly. Key relevant policies within the new Local Plan include the following:

- E1: Landscape
- E7: Conservation of Protected Sites
- E8: Dorset Heathlands
- E9: Poole Harbour
- E10: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- E12: Design
- EE4: Supporting vibrant and attractive tourism
- I3: Green infrastructure, trees and hedgerows

Other Policy Documents

3.18 There are a number of other key policy documents that will comprise material considerations in the determination of this application including the following:

- The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted 31 March 2020.
- Poole Harbour Recreation SPD
- Nitrates SPD
- Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal and Mitigation Plan.
- Purbeck District design guide SPD adopted January 2014.
- Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024
 - C1 – The AONB and its setting is conserved and enhanced by good planning and development
 - C2 – Landscape assessment and monitoring is effective and supports good decision making
 - C4 – Development which has negative effects on the natural beauty of the AONB, its special qualities, ecosystem flows and natural processes is avoided
- Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidance 2019
- Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020 - 2025

4. Proposed Development and Alternatives

Summary of the Proposals

- 4.1 The following section provides a summary of the proposed development as well as alternative approaches considered in the evolution of the design. Refer to the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application for full details of the design evolution.

Land Use Mix and Quantum

- 4.2 The redevelopment of Knoll House Hotel reconfigures the Site to offer a range of accommodation types including:
- Extension and refurbishment of the existing hotel to provide 30 new hotel rooms; and,
 - Provision of 48 units of accommodation comprising garden villas (26 units) and holiday apartments (22 units) to cater for families and individuals.
- 4.3 The additional buildings will also accommodate new leisure facilities including: indoor and outdoor pool, spa treatment facilities, jacuzzi and sauna/steam room, fitness studio, café/juice bar and fine dining restaurant.
- 4.4 The new resort will not contain a shop. Hotel guests can continue to visit Studland Stores if they need anything the hotel cannot provide. A selection of basic sundries will be available for sale at the resort, as is common to all hotels.

Design and Layout

- 4.5 The proposals adopt a landscape-led design approach to deliver a high-quality leisure and tourism resort, suited to the modern tourism market. The redevelopment would focus on the delivery of new high-quality tourist accommodation in a range of formats together with proportionate facilities to support the new development in a resort format.
- 4.6 A central garden area is proposed at the heart of the Site, allowing for informal recreational activity and relaxation, whereas the formal planting and landscaped area to the front of the hotel and adjacent to Ferry Road, will remain as existing to retain the character of the hotel frontage.

Sustainability

- 4.7 The redevelopment of the old buildings provides the opportunity to deliver a new energy efficient design, better able to respond to climate change. The revised design has taken a strongly landscape-led approach to the form and layout, focussing on low density site coverage and integration into local context.

4.8 The design process has been sustainably-led adopting a 'fabric first' approach. Promoting biodiversity and resilience to climate change are key considerations within the revised scheme. Key sustainability features proposed include:

- Additional tree planting;
- Providing green roofs for enhancing biodiversity and carbon sequestration;
- The reduction and attenuation of surface water run off through absorption by green roof substrate;
- Habitat creation for invertebrates; and,
- A community heating system.

Resort Accommodation

4.9 A unit of hotel and leisure accommodation is often referred to as a 'key'. This represents a lettable unit of accommodation, such as a hotel bedroom or apartment. A 'key' may include more than one bedroom. As a result of the redevelopment the overall number of keys will reduce from 106 currently to 78 following the redevelopment. Typically, even in a full capacity situation where all keys have been let out, not all of the bedrooms under all of the keys will be fully occupied.

4.10 The existing hotel provides rooms of varying sizes, including a number of family rooms (30 rooms are capable of accommodating a family of four and further 33 rooms capable of accommodating a family of three). The proposed hotel rooms have been designed to accommodate a double bed (a capacity of two) with larger parties occupying the proposed apartments and villas. As such the existing and proposed accommodation mix is not directly comparable. The operating model of the resort will be one focusing on a luxury product providing guests with more space, whereas the existing hotel is a high volume lower cost hotel.

4.11 The garden villas and holiday apartments will be rented as holiday accommodation and will not be able to be used as market housing for principal residence. The apartments and villas will remain under the control and operation of Kingfisher. The cost of renting out the apartments per night/week and the nature of the accommodation means that it is considered highly unlikely that guests would seek to retain the accommodation on a long-term basis.

4.12 The villas and apartments will have kitchens or kitchenettes. However, these units will function as part of the resort. Guests will 'check-in' and the use of the resort facilities will be promoted, including the catering options. The villas and apartments will not function in the same way as a standalone self-catering cottage or house, they will form part of a holiday resort.

4.13 A condition could be placed on the planning permission by the Local Planning Authority to prevent the accommodation units from being used as a primary residence in perpetuity (i.e. permanently). This is a common planning approach for self-catering holiday accommodation.

Seasonal Opening

- 4.14 Historically the previous owners operated the hotel on a more seasonal basis, closing for a period in the winter. Staff were predominantly employed on a contract basis, arriving when the hotel opened and leaving again when the hotel closed. This necessitated the provision of 57 on-site staff accommodation units, in addition to the 106 hotel rooms for guests (equating to 163 bedrooms in total). Since their purchase in 2017, Kingfisher Resorts have subsequently operated the hotel for a longer season. There is no restriction on the operation of the existing hotel throughout the year currently and the resort will continue to operate on a year-round basis following the redevelopment.
- 4.15 At present, the majority of staff live on site. Following the redevelopment none of the staff will live on site. As a result, the number of people residing on the site at any one time will reduce. There are currently no restrictions on the use of the staff accommodation as lettable accommodation at present. Accordingly, in the 'do nothing' scenario there is nothing to prevent an alternative staffing strategy to enable an increase in guest accommodation to be let out.

Landscaping

- 4.16 The proposal has been designed to respond directly to the surrounding landscape character of the site. A central open green space is proposed with the accommodation designed around it, interwoven with planting and landscaped pedestrian routes.
- 4.17 The use of green roofs and low site coverage aims to deliver an integrated built form, harmonious with its wider surroundings. The accompanying Design and Access Statement provides full details.

Ecology

- 4.18 Through the various landscape strategies, a range of ecological enhancements are proposed to be incorporated into the development to enhance species-richness beyond what is currently existing on-site.
- 4.19 Protected species surveys have been undertaken with the details of appropriate mitigations set out within the Ecology chapter of this report
- 4.20 To enhance the long-term management of the adjacent woodland a Woodland Management Plan has been prepared that will implement preservation measures.
- 4.21 Designated dog walking areas are proposed to reduce the potential for effects on designated sites.
- 4.22 A package of environmental stewardship enhancement measures are proposed including risk reduction measures and measures to increase staff and guests' knowledge and awareness of surrounding sensitive environments.

Parking and Access Arrangements

- 4.23 The existing main vehicular access off Ferry Road is to be retained and will continue to be used by visitors and delivery vehicles. Servicing will be carried out entirely within the Site boundary and all vehicles will enter and exit the Site in a forward direction. The existing junction layout (including kerb radii and visibility) has been assessed as sufficient to support all potential vehicle use without detriment to the adjoining public highway. The priority T-junction has been subject to a full swept path analysis utilising the largest vehicles that will require access to the Site. Refer to the Transport Assessment accompanying this application for full details.
- 4.24 79 car parking spaces are proposed as part of the redevelopment. The existing provision is informal and does not promote an efficient use of space, with the quantum of available parking fluctuating depending on how vehicles have parked on site. In reality the resort would not exceed 90% occupancy, even at peak times and this has been reflected in the number of available spaces on site.
- 4.25 Cycle parking will be provided for staff, guests and visitors and a shuttle bus will be in operation for guests to visit the wider area.
- 4.26 A Framework Travel Plan has been submitted and include a proposed Staff electric shuttle bus.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 4.27 A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application alongside proposals for the upgraded surface water drainage and foul drainage strategy. Refer to Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy Technical Note (Patrick Parsons, October 2022) for full details of proposals.

Staffing and Local Community Benefits

- 4.28 A package of enhancement measures is proposed to maximise and secure wider benefits for the local community and local economy as fully detailed within the Socio-economic Effects Chapter of this report (Chapter 5).
- 4.29 Currently the staff, many of whom are seasonal contractors, live on site in accommodation. Following the redevelopment, given the changing nature of the resort, staff will be retained on permanent, full-time (or equivalent) employment contracts. As such, staff will be recruited from the surrounding area and accommodation will no longer be provided on site. A staff electric shuttle bus will be provided by Kingfisher to transport staff to and from the resort. This approach is being implemented by Kingfisher elsewhere.
- 4.30 The Staff Development Strategy (Appendix 5.1 of the Socio-economic Effects chapter) has been updated that provides a Framework for the approach to staffing the Resort.

- 4.31 The proposed new spa and leisure facilities will be accessible only to members paying a private membership subscription. They will not be open to the general public on a drop-in type basis. The hotel management are considering a discounted membership rate for local people following recent community liaison. The new café and restaurant will be available for public use.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.32 The application site was purchased by the Applicant for the purpose of redevelopment. The site was chosen, above others, due to the character of the existing hotel and the surrounding area. However, it is recognised that operationally, in the current tourism market context, the hotel accommodation and facilities require major investment and regeneration moving forward.
- 4.33 This site is one of the largest brownfield sites in the area and presents a unique opportunity to revitalise an underused hotel asset to maintain and enhance the tourist market in Studland and wider area. In terms of tourist attractions, the location of the site is considered to be highly desirable and was therefore chosen for redevelopment to maximise the benefits of this location in terms of its far-reaching views, coastline and local beaches.
- 4.34 The previous owner sold the site at the point of retirement, and this provided the opportunity to redevelop the site to ensure the hotel reflected the requirements and desires of the modern tourism market. However, to deliver a viable proposal both in the short and medium term (to justify the significant capital investment and operational viability) a critical mass of accommodation is required to support the level of services and facilities proposed. In turn, the services and facilities are required to deliver a sustainable 'resort' style development which meets the requirements of the modern visitor.

Alternative Designs and Site Layout Evolution

- 4.35 The design process for the submitted scheme has considered and tested a number of alternative configurations for the site having regard to environmental and design-led opportunities and constraints which have been tested and analysed through the evolution of the layout. The design process has also been informed by:
- Engineering opportunities and constraints including the unique site topography;
 - Extensive pre-application engagement process with Purbeck District Council, the National Trust, Natural England and the Dorset AONB Partnership during the determination of the previous application;
 - Environmental baseline assessments for the site to establish any constraints which needed to inform the design process; and
 - Responses received during the extensive public consultation exercise.

- 4.36 The Design and Access Statement accompanying the application sets out in detail the iterative design process that has taken place as informed by the pre-application consultation process. The design has developed over time since the original concept was proposed as part of the 2018 planning application. Following feedback on the 2018 scheme, further design changes took place in 2019 with a revised application pack submitted at that time. This application was ultimately refused in 2022 partly due to concerns regarding scale, form and massing. The assessments of the environmental effects of the 2018 proposals and the revised 2019 proposals are contained within the Knoll House Environmental Statement (2018) and the Knoll House Environmental Statement Addendum (2019). The associated Council's response is set out within the Committee Report for application ref: 6/2018/0566. These documents are already before the council and publicly available.
- 4.37 Key stages in the development of the design from the 2018 layout leading up to the latest 2022 submission include the following:
1. Existing massing was originally scattered over the site with higher elements located to the north east.
 2. Removal of buildings which had reached the end of their life.
 3. Initial designs focused on the arrangement of two crescent shapes to house villas and apartments. The villas bisected the site diagonally with pockets of green amenity space created between building footprints.
 4. Massing of the crescent shapes was then broken up to provide a vibrant green space providing attractive and comfortable spaces to wait, sit and stroll through.
 5. Following an initial design review the crescent shape was reduced in height. This allowed for an open central green space and height concentrated in the area most concealed. Two storey villas were orientated adjacent to the car park and away from the boundary to ensure long distance views were maintained into the heart of the development.
 6. The crescent and hotel extension was then further broken up to add interest and impact less on the surrounding landscape.

Do Nothing Scenario

- 4.38 The evaluation of a site in the absence of specific proposals should be addressed, which can be described as the 'do nothing' alternative. The 'do nothing' scenario is a hypothetical alternative, conventionally considered as a basis for comparing the development proposal under consideration.

4.39 With reference to the submitted application, this would comprise the Knoll House Hotel to remain as existing. Although currently operational, due to the deteriorating nature of many of the building and facilities on site, if the hotel were to remain undeveloped it is likely that the attraction of the resort would decrease and ultimately the hotel would have to close, to the detriment of the tourism market of the area. It would not be a commercially viable proposition to make the major capital investment necessary to improve the existing stock of buildings to underpin a desirable business on the site. The holiday market requirements have evolved since the first construction of the hotel and its 'hay day'. As stated within the Council's Committee Report on the previous (refused) application the Council appears to have accepted the principle of the need to redevelop the hotel:

"The hotel is tired looking and in need of an update. The principle of providing an enhanced hotel and visitor facilities is in principle supported." (Report to Eastern Area Planning Committee, 09/02/2022, p42)