

## Application details

<b>Ref:</b> P/FUL/2024/04613	<b>Applicant:</b> Churchill Living Ltd	<b>Case Officer:</b> Penny Canning
<b>Address:</b> Land to rear of 156 - 172, South Street, Bridport, DT6 3NP		
<b>Description:</b> Redevelopment for erection of retirement living accommodation comprising 48 apartments, 25 cottages, communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping to create an integrated retirement community.		
<b>Case Officer comments to Consultee:</b>		
<b>Consultee:</b> Colm O'Kelly - Senior Landscape Architect - Infrastructure and Delivery Team		
<b>Date:</b> 23 October 2024		
<b>Has a Pre-application discussion taken place with you?:</b> Yes / No		
<b>Support</b>		
<b>Support subject to condition</b>		
<b>Unable to support</b>		
<b>No objection</b>	Subject to conditions.	
<b>Request for further information</b>		
<b>Other</b>		

## Summary

The proposed development site consists of brownfield land within the town centre area of the settlement of Bridport which lies within the Dorset National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The proposed development consists of a retirement housing development of 21 two storey terraced cottages; 4 semi detached two bedroom cottages; and a three storey block of flats containing 48 one and two bedroom apartments; together with associated communal facilities, vehicle access, car parking and landscaping.

As the proposed development is on a previously developed site within the town centre area and the defined development boundary of Bridport I consider it unlikely that it would have a significant adverse impact on the Dorset National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or that it would harm its character or special qualities.

Equally I consider that the location and design would not detract from and, in comparison to the site's current use, would be likely to enhance local landscape and townscape character.

While I would ideally prefer to be able to review detailed hard and soft landscape proposals prior to the determination of the application, I have no landscape or visual objection to the scheme as currently proposed subject to the inclusion of conditions in any future planning approval regarding the submission, approval, implementation and maintenance of such proposals.

## Site description/context/significance



**Figure 1: Site in Context**

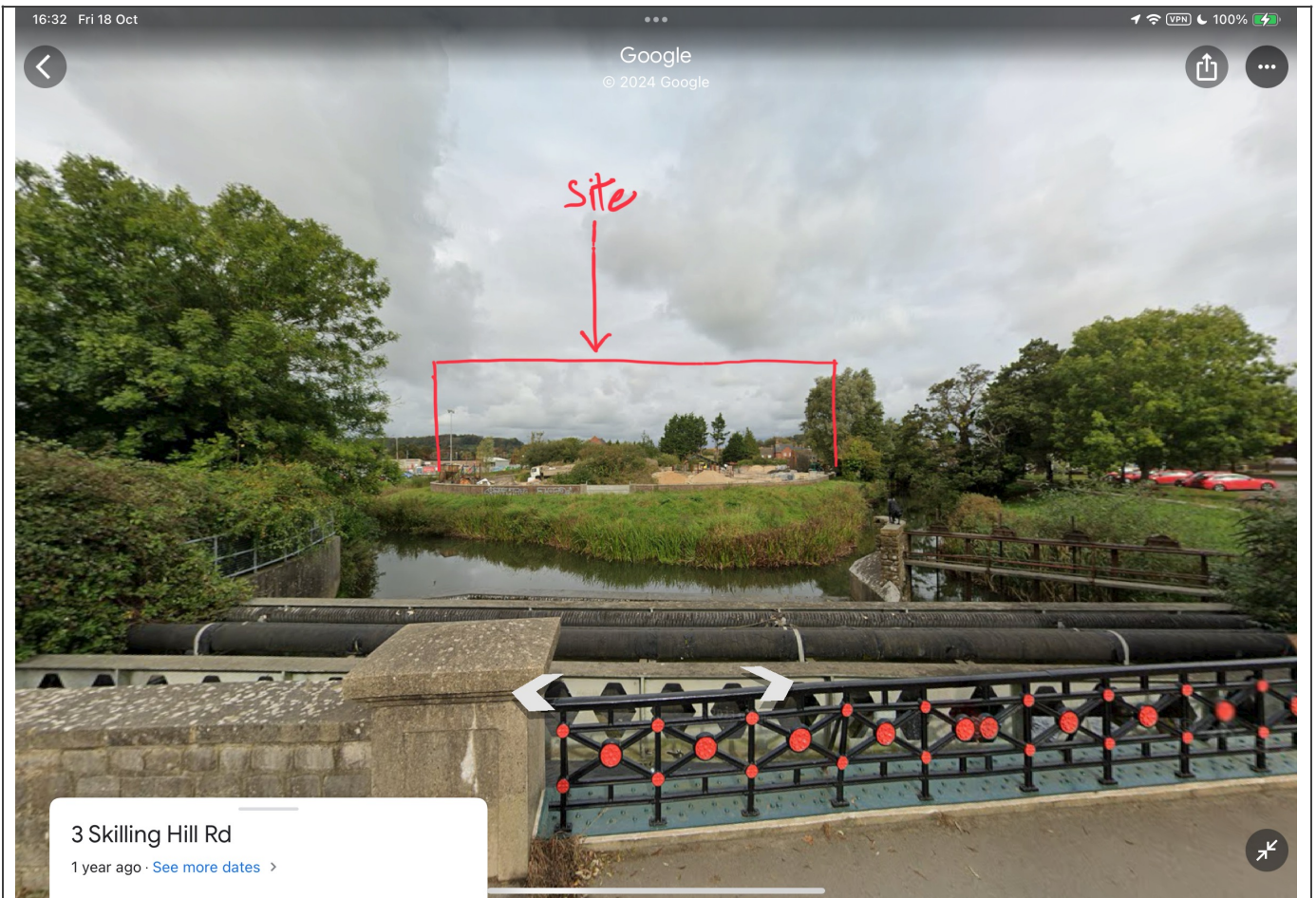
The proposed 1.05 hectare development site consists of brownfield land within the settlement of Bridport. It is bounded to the north by residential development on the north side of Doctor Roberts Close; to the east by the B3157 South Street, a recycling centre and a builders merchant and yard; to the south by the River Brit, Skilling Hill Road, and Palmers Brewery and car park; and to the west by the River Brit, a Public Right of Way along the western bank of the River Brit (PRoW W1/33), and Bridport Football Club.

Close views of the site are possible from the roads and footpaths which immediately surround it (see **Figure 3**). However, middle distant views from within the town itself are likely to be screened or filtered due to the relatively flat topography of its immediate surroundings, the existing urban fabric of the town, and intervening vegetation.

While middle distant and distant views towards the town are likely to be possible from the higher ground to its north, east, south and west (see **Figure 2**), within these views the site and, more importantly the proposed development, are unlikely to be readily discernible from the existing built fabric of the town.



**Figure 2: VP1** view toward the site from East Cliff above West Bay (May 2013).



**Figure 3:** VP2 view towards the site from Skilling Hill Road (October 2023)

Bridport lies within the Dorset National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The southern and western portions of the site lie within the Undulating River Valley Dorset Landscape Character Type, and the whole of the site lies within the Brit Valley National Landscape Character Area.

The Undulating River Valley Dorset Landscape Character Type is based on the river valleys of the Brit and Axe, and their meandering flat river floodplains with rolling adjacent hills are characteristic features, as is its diverse character ranging from open rolling countryside to market towns such as Bridport.

Long open views along the valley floor and market towns with strong industrial heritage are noted as a key characteristics and special qualities of the Brit Valley National Landscape Area and while, away from Bridport and Beaminster, the area has largely retained its strong undeveloped rural character, tranquillity, remoteness and dark night skies this clearly does not apply to the proposed development site. However, protecting the area from the influence of further intrusive development is a key objective as is ensuring that settlement growth is directed to areas of least sensitivity, and the inclusion of appropriate landscape mitigation measures in any such development.

The planning guidelines included in the character area description state that it should be ensured that new housing development is complementary to settlement scale, form and density and that appropriate mitigation measures are secured; that the use of previously developed land where well connected to settlement form should be promoted before greenfield sites; that appropriate materials and architectural detailing should be appropriate; and the impact of associated features including, lighting, parking and access should be reduced.

## **Main issues**

Would the scale and extent of the proposed development be limited and located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the National Landscape? (NPPF 182)

Would the proposed development harm the character, special qualities or natural beauty of the Dorset National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including its characteristic landscape quality and diversity, uninterrupted panoramic views, individual landmarks and sense of tranquility and remoteness? (WDWPLP ENV1, BANP L1)

Has the proposed development been located and designed so that it does not detract from and, where reasonable, enhances local landscape character? (WDWPLP ENV1, BANP L1)

Would the proposed development incorporate measures to moderate the adverse effects of development on the landscape? (WDWPLP ENV1)

Would the proposed development secure the visual enhancement of the site of existing development of visual poor quality? (WDWPLP ENV1)

Would the proposed development significantly adversely effect the character or visual quality of the local landscape? (WDWPLP ENV1)

Would the proposed development contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness and would the development be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings? (WDWPLP ENV10)

Would the proposed development provide for the future retention and protection of trees and other features which contribute to the areas distinctive character? (WDWPLP ENV10)

Would the proposed development provide sufficient hard and soft landscaping to successfully integrate with the character of the site and the surrounding area? (WDWPLP ENV10)

Would the development function well and add to the overall quality of the area not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development? (NPPF 135 a))

Would the proposed development be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping? (NPPF 135 b), WDWPLP ENV11 i))

Would the proposed development be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities) (NPPF 135 c))

Would the proposed development establish and maintain a strong sense of place using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create an attractive, welcoming and distinctive place to live, work and visit? (NPPF 135 d))

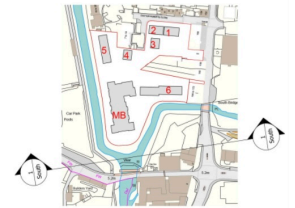
Would the proposed development optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks? (NPPF 135 e) WDWPLP ENV11 i))





South Elevation/ Section  
Scale 1:250

- Key
- Brunswick Farmhouse Mixture Red or similar
  - Bexhill Purple Multi or similar
  - Brick heads - Surrey County Red or similar
  - Marley Duo Edgemere Slate - Smooth Grey or similar
  - Marley Duo Edgemere Slate - Old English Dark Red or similar
  - Cast stone detailing
  - Painted brick

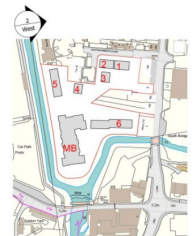


**Figure 5:** proposed south elevation approximation of the view form Skilling Hill Road.



West Elevation/ Section  
Scale 1:250

- Key
- Brunswick Farmhouse Mixture Red or similar
  - Bexhill Purple Multi or similar
  - Brick heads - Surrey County Red or similar
  - Marley Duo Edgemere Slate - Smooth Grey or similar
  - Marley Duo Edgemere Slate - Old English Dark Red or similar
  - Cast stone detailing
  - Painted brick



**Figure 6:** Proposed west elevation approximation of the view from PRoW W1/33

The proposed development consists of a retirement housing development of 21 two storey terraced two bedroom cottages consisting of two terraces of 3 cottages, one terrace of 6 cottages and one terrace of 9 cottages; 4 semi detached two bedroom cottages; and a three storey block of flats containing 48 one and two bedroom apartments; together with associated communal facilities, vehicle access, car parking and landscaping.

### **Comments on proposal**

As the proposed development is on a previously developed site within the town centre area (BANP map 12 p.69) and the defined development boundary I consider it unlikely that it would have a significant adverse impact on the Dorset National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or that it would harm its character or special qualities.

Equally I consider that the location and design would not detract from and, in comparison to the site's current use, would be likely to enhance local landscape and townscape character.

Clearly the proposed development incorporates areas of landscaping around the proposed buildings roads and parking that would moderate the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

I therefore consider that the development, as currently proposed, would be unlikely to significantly adversely effect the character or visual quality of the local landscape or the surrounding townscape and indeed it would be likely to secure the visual enhancement of a site of existing development of visual poor quality.

I consider that the proposed development would contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness and that it would be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings.

The development would result in the removal of one marginal category B moderate quality Western Red Cedar Tree Group (G31); four category C low quality tree groups of Willow (G8), Cypress/Western Red Cedar (G26), and Cypress (G27, G30); two category C low quality Goat Willow trees (T22, T23); and four very poor quality trees in need of felling irrespective of the development because of serious defects (G9, T10, T28, T29).

These trees are predominantly located on the northern boundary of the site, and while I would defer to the views of my arboricultural colleagues, I do not consider them to be significant landscape features and their loss would be mitigated through the planting of new trees within the site in any case.

However, given that this is a full planning application I am surprised that a landscape strategy plan has been submitted but detailed hard and soft landscape proposals do not appear to have been and this would appear to be at odds with the latest validation requirements for major development (Dorset Council Planning Applications. National and Local List of Requirements p.48 V 17 -09-2024).

Though the submission and approval of detailed hard and soft proposals could be conditioned as part of any future approval for the scheme, I would ideally like to have seen and reviewed such proposals before the application is determined.

In addition, as shown in **Figure 7** below, I consider that there are a number of locations within the layout as currently proposed that would appear to present opportunities for additional tree planting.

At present I consider that the streets within the development as currently proposed do not meet the common definition of tree lined (“*of a road, path, etc.) having a row of trees on either side.*” OED) and no clear, compelling and justifiable reasons appear to have been given as to why tree lined streets would be inappropriate. As such the proposals do not currently meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 136. However, this could be rectified to some degree if additional trees were proposed in the locations identified in **Figure 7**.

I would also note that, with the exception of units 1 to 8, the cottages would seem to have no gardens and limited rear elevated decks which would provide limited amenity presumably because of the need for flood prevention measures due to the cottages being within flood zones 2 and 3.

As previously noted I would prefer to be able to review detailed hard and soft landscape proposals prior to the determination of the application. However, I have no landscape or visual objection to the scheme as currently proposed subject to the inclusion of the following conditions in any future planning approval.



**Figure 7:** Extract from Landscape Strategy Plan - potential sites for additional tree planting

**Hard and soft Landscaping (pre-commencement)**

No development shall commence until a hard and soft landscape scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing details of all trees and other planting to be retained; a planting specification and plan to include numbers, size, species, positions of all new trees and shrubs; details of existing and proposed levels, walls, fences and other boundary treatments and surface treatments of the open parts of the site; and a programme of implementation.

**Reason:** to ensure the adequate mitigation of the landscape and visual impact of the proposals and the provision of an appropriate hard and soft landscape scheme prior to the commencement of the development.

**Hard and Soft Landscape Implementation (pre-occupation)**

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 use of the site or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** to ensure that the agreed hard and soft landscape scheme is implemented.

**Hard and Soft Landscaping Maintenance to Completion (compliance)**

Any trees or other plants indicated in the approved scheme which, within a period of five years from the date of the development being completed, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a species and size to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Hard landscape features will be maintained in perpetuity.

**Reason:** to ensure that the agreed hard and soft landscaping scheme is established and maintained.

**Policy consideration****National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023**

Paragraphs 135, 136, 182

**West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (WDWPLP)**

Policies ENV1, ENV10, ENV11

**Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (BANP) 2020**

Policy L1

**Officer:** Colm O’Kelly - BSc (hons), MPhil, CMLI, MBA, PGDip

**Job Title:** Senior Landscape Architect - Infrastructure and Delivery Team

**Date:** 23 October 2024