



12 September 2014

Attn: Planning Office – North Dorset District Council
Ref: **Draft North Dorset Local Plan**

Dear Sirs,

We would like to comment on the change to the local plan to include St Mary's Hill. In the light of this change, we strongly believe the land the west of Blandford St Mary, between Dorchester Hill and Fairmile Road, should now be removed from the local plan.

My reasons for this are as follows:

1. Better road access.
 - Dorchester Hill is too narrow to take extra traffic and the junction where Dorchester Hill, Fair Mile Road and New Road all meet is extremely dangerous.
 - There are no pavements or streetlights, whereas there are pavements and streetlights already in place at St Mary's Hill.
 - Less disruption for the villagers.
 - Building on St Mary's Hill will have very little impact on the main village thereby leaving Dorchester Hill to stay as a country lane (dead end).
2. As with the Bryanston Hills development the suggestion is that the proposed housing on Dorchester Hill will provide accommodation for those working in Bournemouth and Poole. With the recent reduction in public transport (namely buses) due to County Council budget cuts, we would suggest that the St. Mary's Hill development is far more practical for addressing the needs of commuters and for the safety of pedestrians which include a number of school children. Something you may not be aware of is that school children have been verbally challenged for walking on the road and obstructing car drivers' progress - for not walking on the pavement when no pavement exists on Dorchester Hill!
3. Less impact on wildlife; there are greater horse-shoe bats on the land around Dorchester Hill which are protected by law and we are aware that another resident of Blandford St. Mary has highlighted the numerous laws relating to bat protection which would prohibit any land between Dorchester Hill and Fair Mile Road including the adjacent countryside being included in any housing development plan. It is our understanding that you would be breaking the law if you went ahead and included the aforementioned land in any housing development proposal now or in the

future. It is our understanding that you have consulted with English Nature, but have you consulted with key agencies i.e. Dorset Wildlife Trust and Vincent Wildlife Trust?

4. The area of Dorchester Hill is very important as it is countryside and adjacent to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would have a detrimental effect on the look of the whole area. However from our research so far it has not been possible to identify the date when the land in question at Dorchester Hill was removed from the AONB status.
5. Over-development of the village of Blandford St Mary if both sites are to be included, bearing in mind that outline planning permission has already been given to build 200 houses on the Hall & Woodhouse brewery site. The Environmental Statement Volume 3 - Non-technical Summary dated November 2006 considers the impact on the AONB both near and far whereas no environmental impact statement was supposedly needed for the land off Dorchester Hill, which is closer by some distance to the AONB than the brewery site.
6. We understand that only 150 houses were included for the Crown Meadows site. A figure of 250 plus for St. Mary's Hill has been identified in the most recent draft of the North Dorset Plan. In realistic terms the removal of the proposed 150 dwellings from the Crown Meadows site following the pressure from a very high profile and well funded campaign has left the residents of Blandford St. Mary at a disadvantage. The current proposal for housing in the village of Blandford St Mary, which is identified in the current draft North Dorset Local Plan, is for a total of 510 dwellings. The 60 houses suggested for Dorchester Hill would be gross over-development, taking into account the outline planning permission for the brewery site and the more appropriate site of St. Mary's Hill. According to the local plan this would mean that Blandford St. Mary, which is after all is a *village*, would have half of the building requirement identified for the town of Blandford.
7. In our opinion the development of the land adjacent to Dorchester Hill, Blandford St. Mary would increase the flood risk considerably for those properties situated at the lower lying land and in the area of Berkeley Lodge and the Stour Inn, which, you will know from your records, have experienced severe flooding issues this year. The most recent of which being in the Berkeley Lodge area in August of this year.
8. We believe NDDC forget that Blandford St Mary is a village; they seem to include it within Blandford, which it is not. The draft plan actually notes 'Blandford (Forum and St. Mary)'. It is our understanding that the most recent proposal to include the village of Blandford St. Mary within the boundary of Blandford Forum was rejected. THIS MEANS BLANDFORD ST MARY REMAINS A VILLAGE and any plan for future housing should consider it as such, rather than suggest it is a town.

Please bear in mind that Blandford St. Mary has already had a large development built over the last decade within the boundary of the by-pass and therefore we believe that building on St Mary's Hill would be a much more appropriate location to build the necessary homes. Our reasoning for this is:

- Better access for residents to commute to work and for recreation.

- Better drainage facilities direct into the main river via identified flood plain which would reduce the risk of flooding to residential properties and businesses at the bottom of Dorchester Hill.
- Less impact on protected species of wildlife.

Regards,

Mr. Gareth Simpson
Mrs. Debbie Simpson