

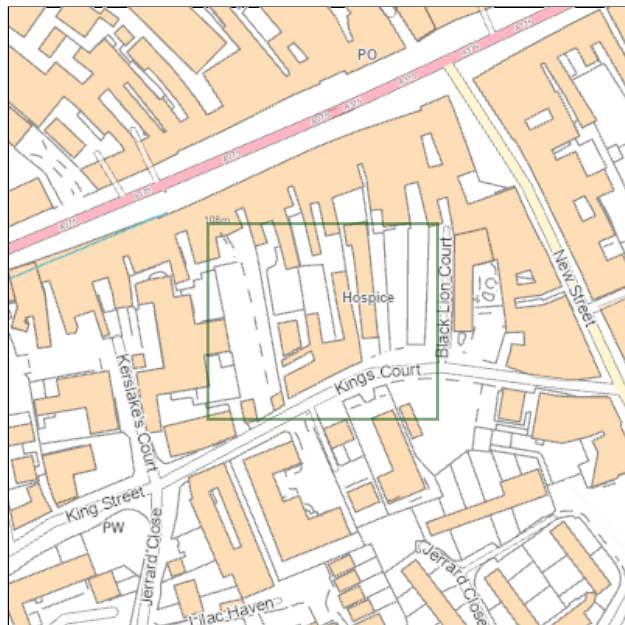
Ward Honiton St Michaels

Reference 24/1787/FUL

Applicant Mr Michael Belcher

Location Land To Rear Of Barn Mews King Street
Honiton

Proposal The erection of a two bedroom dwelling



RECOMMENDATION: Refusal

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		Committee Date: 28.01.2025
Honiton St Michaels (Honiton)	24/1787/FUL	Target Date: 22.10.2024
Applicant:	Mr Michael Belcher	
Location:	Land To Rear Of Barn Mews King Street	
Proposal:	The erection of a two bedroom dwelling	

RECOMMENDATION: Refusal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application is before the Committee because the recommendation is contrary to the view of one of the Ward Members.

The proposal is for a single-storey, 2-bed dwelling. The site is within the Built-up Area Boundary of Honiton, providing easy access to local amenities and public transport. Given that the site is suitably located, the main issues are (i) whether the proposal would provide high quality living conditions for future occupiers with regard to privacy and outlook; and (ii) whether the proposal would conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Honiton Conservation Area within which it is located.

The site is heavily overlooked from all sides and the dwelling would be built close to the site boundaries, compromising privacy and outlook. This would result in poor living conditions, particularly for the kitchen/living area and the smallest bedroom, as well as the outdoor amenity space. The proposed design has failed to take the opportunities available to avoid these harms, leading to poor living conditions for future occupants, contrary to NPPF paragraph 135, which requires developments to deliver a high standard of amenity.

The Conservation Area around the site is characterised by its long, narrow burgage plots, many of which have been heavily developed. The proposal would add to the mass of development and erode an area of open space within the burgage plots which is a remnant from their historic use for growing food or keeping animals. Furthermore, the design, with its uncharacteristic L-shaped form and low mono-pitch roof, fails to respect the area's established pattern of linear dual-pitched buildings. The combination of the loss of open space and the unsympathetic design would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to Policy EN10 of the Local Plan.

In response to this assessment, the agent has cited several precedents but these differ significantly in context and do not justify the proposal's poor living conditions and harm to the Conservation Area.

In conclusion, the proposal offers modest social and economic benefits but at the expense of future occupants' living conditions and the Conservation Area's character and appearance. The harm outweighs the benefits, leading to a recommendation for refusal.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Honiton St Michaels - Cllr Jenny Brown

My thoughts are that this site is typical of the back areas of Honiton, there are so many little alleyways to properties. We need affordable, local housing, this gives an opportunity to build a small, affordable unit. At present the site is a home for rubbish and a breeding ground for rats.

I agree with the Town Council and am in support of this application at the present time.

If this proceeds to planning committee then I will keep an open mind until I have heard all the discussion both for and against.

Parish/Town Council

Unanimous SUPPORT

Other Representations

None received.

Technical Consultations

Environmental Health

I have considered the application and note that this site is close to nearby residents who may be impacted during the construction process. Construction working hours shall be 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays, with no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays. There shall be no burning on site. We would request the applicant to consult and follow the council's Construction Sites Code of Practice prepared by Environmental Health and adopted by the council in order to ensure that any impacts are kept to a minimum. This is available on the council's website.

Conservation

The Conservation dept do not wish to comment on this application and will accept the case officer's decision.

DCC Historic Environment Officer

The proposed development lies within the historic core of Honiton, in the rear part of a medieval burghage plot aligned on High Street and in an area where any ground

disturbance has the potential to expose archaeological or artefactual deposits associated with the medieval settlement here. The Historic Environment Team recommends that this application should be supported by the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) setting out a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken in mitigation for the loss of heritage assets with archaeological interest. The WSI should be based on national standards and guidance and be approved by the Historic Environment Team.

PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
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The Application Site

24/0070/FUL	Demolition of a vacant outbuilding which is currently part fallen down and unsafe.	Approval with conditions	27.02.2024
22/1253/OUT	Outline application for the construction of a single storey dwelling (including consideration of matters relating to Design, Scale, Layout and External Appearance) and including demolition of existing outbuilding	Withdrawn	15.11.2022

Barn Mews

22/2280/VAR	Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 5 (garden subdivision) and 6 (bin and bicycle storage) of planning permission 18/1228/FUL (Conversion of existing house into 4 no. flats and re-building of existing barn in the back garden to create 3 no. flats) to correct the labelling of the west elevation and revise a window design in the west elevation, omit the car parking and communal garden, provide details of fencing and revise the bicycle parking	Approval retrospective (conditions)	15.06.2023
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18/1228/FUL	Conversion of existing house into 4 no. flats and re-building of existing barn in the back garden to create 3 no. flats.	Approval with conditions	09.08.2018
15/2237/FUL	Conversion of existing house into 4 no. flats and re-building of existing barn in the back garden to create 3 no. flats	Approval with conditions	06.04.2016

POLICIES

Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies

Strategy 1 (Spatial Strategy for Development in East Devon)
 Strategy 2 (Scale and Distribution of Residential Development)
 Strategy 3 (Sustainable Development)
 Strategy 4 (Balanced Communities)
 Strategy 5B (Sustainable Transport)
 Strategy 6 (Development within Built-up Area Boundaries)
 Strategy 23 (Development at Honiton)
 Strategy 48 (Local Distinctiveness in the Built Environment)
 Strategy 49 (The Historic Environment)
 D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)
 EN9 (Development Affecting a Designated Heritage Asset)
 EN10 (Conservation Areas)
 EN22 (Surface Run-Off Implications of New Development)
 TC2 (Accessibility of New Development)
 TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access)
 TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development)

Government Planning Documents

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2024)
 National Planning Practice Guidance

Site Location and Description

The site is a small parcel of unused land in the Conservation Area between the High Street and King Street in the centre of Honiton. It is part of the curtilage of Barn Mews, a recent development of seven flats achieved through the conversion and extension of a building fronting onto King Street. Access to the site is through a passage which passes the entrance to the Barn Mews flats. Near the front of the site is a dilapidated single storey stone building which has consent to be demolished. The remainder of the site has been used to dump rubble and waste and is covered with weeds.

ANALYSIS

Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a single storey 2-bed dwelling.

The site is accessed through a passageway beneath/beside Barn Mews, and whilst Barn Mews has been developed into seven flats, the land at the rear has been left unused. It was initially proposed to use the land as a garden for the occupants of the flats in a 2015 scheme and then to use it for car parking and as garden in a 2018 scheme. However, both the parking and the garden were omitted in a 2022 variation to the approved scheme, meaning that the land is no longer required to serve the occupants of the flats.

Also in 2022, an outline application for a dwelling on the land was submitted but got withdrawn because of concerns about the loss of the stone building and the need to assess its heritage significance. Subsequently, approval was granted for its demolition, although at the time of the site visit for this application, the building was still standing.

With the land no longer required for the flats and the demolition of the stone building approved, a fresh attempt to gain planning permission for a dwelling has been made. Given the town centre location of the site, within the Built-up Area Boundary for Honiton, there is easy access to local amenities, including public transport, and therefore future occupiers would not need to rely on travel by car to meet their day-to-day needs. The site is therefore suitably located for a dwelling having regard to the strategic policies of the Local Plan, particularly Strategies 1, 2, 5B and 6.

The main issues are therefore:

- Whether the proposal would provide high quality living conditions for future occupiers with regard to privacy and outlook; and
- Whether the proposal would conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Honiton Conservation Area (CA).

Living conditions

The site is heavily overlooked, with upper floor windows on all sides that are in close proximity to the site boundary, as illustrated in the following images.



View to the south towards Barn Mews showing the living room windows of the first and second floor flats. The stone building in the foreground would be demolished.



A further view to the south.



View of 1-3 West Elm House to the west of the site showing first floor bedroom windows overlooking the site.



View of the balcony at the rear of The Cottage, 98A High Street, which is a listed building to the north of the site.



View of 1D and 1E King Street (the rendered building), and 1F King Street (the brick building), which are on the east side of the site.

To explain further, on the south side of the site, the three storey Barn Mews building has four first and second floor windows overlooking the site which serve the living areas of flats 6 and 7 (reference 22/2280/VAR). These windows are less than 6 metres from the boundary. There are additional windows over the passageway which face the site at a distance of less than 14 metres.

Three two-storey dwellings have been constructed on the west side of the site, known as 1-3 West Elm House (reference 19/2246/FUL). These each have a first floor bedroom window overlooking the site at a distance of 3 metres from the boundary.

To the north the outlook is more open but there is a first floor balcony that overlooks the site less than five metres from the site boundary. The balcony is accessed via a glazed bedroom door facing the site that is less than 8m from the boundary. Planning permission has been granted to bring this balcony to within 1.5 metres of the site boundary, which would facilitate even closer views into the site (reference 20/1299/FUL). It is not clear if this permission is still extant.

On the east side of the site there is a two storey dwelling (reference 06/0219/FUL) and two flats (reference 89/P0918) facing the site. The dwelling has a first floor bedroom window overlooking the site and the first floor flat has lounge and bedroom windows overlooking. These windows are less than 3 metres from the site boundary. There are further dwellings to the south with oblique or longer range views to the site.

This high degree of overlooking from all directions presents a significant challenge to any designer seeking to secure the necessary high standard of amenity for future users that is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 135).

How does the proposal respond to the constraints presented by the high degree of overlooking?

It is the applicant's view that overlooking is not a constraint and that the living conditions would be no worse than in many other dwellings to be found nearby. However, the applicant is required by national policy to provide a high standard of amenity, and this means that the scheme needs to make the best of the opportunities to create space, privacy and outlook so that future occupiers feel comfortable and at ease in their home. Compromising on amenity is neither necessary nor acceptable in this case.

The proposed dwelling has been designed with high level windows in the west elevation and standard windows in the north elevation. It may be possible to glimpse the interior of the proposed dwelling from properties on the north and west sides of the site but because the dwelling would be so close to the boundary wall (around 1 metre away), opportunities would be limited. Whilst this aspect of the design may be successful in securing the privacy from those directions, it leads to a compromised outlook, which is addressed below.

The east elevation would have a glazed front door and patio doors, both serving the kitchen/living area and providing the main outlook and source of light to that room. The separation distance between these glazed doors and the upper floor windows in the building on the east side of the site would be 6.5 metres, which is far less than the standard requirement of 21 metres. Even if a reduced separation distance is accepted given the urban character of the area, 6.5 metres is less than has been achieved elsewhere and could be improved upon with better design.

Because of the lack of separation, there would be an unobstructed, close range, view from the bedrooms and the living room on the upper floor of the neighbouring building into the living area of the proposed dwelling and also into its only outdoor amenity space. The amenity space would be further compromised by views from the flats to the south. Future occupants of the building would therefore struggle to achieve any level of privacy within both the living room/kitchen and the garden. To achieve privacy in the living room/kitchen, future occupants would be likely to use curtains or blinds and this would severely restrict their outlook. This would lead to poor living conditions that would not satisfy the requirements of paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Living conditions would be further compromised by the restricted outlook from certain windows arising from their proximity to the boundary walls. This would particularly affect the smaller of the two bedrooms which would have no other outlook or access to light, creating an oppressive environment.

It would be possible to overcome these concerns and a potential solution has been offered to the agent that would place windows and amenity spaces where the greatest level of outlook and privacy could be achieved. The agent has declined to

make any changes to his proposal, preferring to seek the support of the Planning Committee for his compromised design.

In summary, the design has failed to overcome the constraints presented by the overlooking of the site from all sides and would not provide a high standard of living conditions for future occupants, contrary to paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Character and appearance

In accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), the LPA has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Honiton Conservation Area has a mostly 18th Century and early 19th Century appearance, with larger buildings fronting the High Street and burgage plots and yards behind. Its character and form reflect its medieval origins, its rebuilding after a series of fires, its industries and agricultural connections, and its former coaching function.

The burgage plots at the rear of Honiton High Street are a distinctive feature of the town's medieval layout and a key characteristic of the conservation area. Over the centuries, many of the original burgage plots have been subdivided or altered to accommodate new buildings and developments. This has led to a more fragmented appearance compared to their original, uniform layout. Despite this, many plots still retain their long, narrow shape, preserving the medieval layout to some extent.

The long, narrow shape of the burgage plots around the application site is still evident but there has been a significant amount of built development meaning that this part of the conservation area is more built-up than it was when the conservation area was designated in 1972. The conservation area appraisal identifies features of special importance, including 'largely unspoilt and sometimes intimate open spaces, especially gardens and allotments woven into the historic remains of the burgage plots.' This in turn contributes to the overall quality and character of the town centre with such places 'hidden' behind the main street frontages.

Since 2016 there has been significant development of some of these open spaces, notably the adjoining site to the west (19/2246/FUL) and the former garden/car park at the rear of Natwest Bank (17/0809/FUL). These have eroded the sense of space, creating a more built-up, cramped environment that is at odds with the historic use of the space behind buildings for gardens, growing food or keeping animals. In the context of all the recent development, the space remaining on the application site takes on greater significance in terms of its contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area.

Notwithstanding that, the conservation officer did not object in principle to the previous application for a dwelling on the site but had reservations about the scale of development. The current proposal has a similar footprint and has not addressed this concern. It would erode a remnant area of open space between heavily built-up sites that provides some visual relief and evidence of the historic character of the area. It

would therefore diminish the significance of the conservation area as a whole by reducing the extent to which the historic open character of the burgage plots can be appreciated.

Turning to the design of the dwelling, the supporting statement explains that the proposal has "a modern mono-pitch to keep the building's height to a minimum and to avoid overlooking". The roof would be covered with zinc-effect metal sheeting and the walls would be a combination of stone, possibly salvaged from the demolition of the existing building, and render.

The L-shaped form and low mono-pitch roof are uncharacteristic features of the area and do not complement the linear form and dual-pitched roofs that dominate the surroundings. Whilst paragraph 212 of the NPPF says "Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas" this must not be to the detriment of the conservation area and does not override the need for high quality design.

While there would be very little public visibility of the proposal, there would be considerable visibility from neighbouring dwellings which enclose the site on all sides. The proposal would therefore have sufficient prominence to result in harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Taken together, the layout, scale and appearance of the proposed dwelling would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, contrary to Policy EN10 of the Local Plan.

The harm arising from this development, owing to its scale relative to the conservation area as a whole, would be 'less than substantial'. Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires the less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal and this exercise is carried out in the conclusion to this report.

Precedents

The agent has drawn our attention to a number of other permissions which he argues compare favourably to this proposal.

23/0653/RES - 29 Winters Lane, Ottery St Mary. This bungalow is not in a conservation area and sits on a larger plot than the application site. There is no direct or close range overlooking of the garden or window-to-window.

22/1647/FUL - 19 High Street, Honiton. This conversion to five dwellings is outside the conservation area. In this case there was a realistic likelihood that a conversion would have been achieved using permitted development rights under Class MA if planning permission had been refused. This fallback position added significant weight in favour of approval. In contrast, there is no possibility of a fallback scheme at Barn Mews.

20/2745/VAR - Land To The Rear Of 160 High Street, Honiton. This development of 6 dwellings was first approved in 1992 under a different planning regime and was

renewed several times after, resulting in the 2020 scheme. The four dwellings on the west side of the site have a reasonable level of privacy and outlook, with windows at the front and rear. The two dwellings on the east side of the site have a restricted outlook to the east, and their west elevation faces the four dwellings at a distance of 7-8 metres, which is greater than the current proposal.

19/2246/FUL - Land to The Rear Of 102 High Street, Honiton. This development of three dwellings was recommended for refusal owing to concerns about the effect on the setting of the listed buildings at the front of the site and the effect on the conservation area from the loss open space. The planning committee acknowledged the harm but approved the application, concluding that "public benefits, in the form of economic benefits from development of the site and social benefits from affordable houses by design, outweighed the less than substantial harm to heritage assets". It does not necessarily follow that the same conclusion can be reached in this case as each proposal must be considered on its merits. Furthermore, a proposal that is 'affordable by design' does not need to compromise the living conditions of its future occupants. Affordability and good design should go together.

19/1065/FUL (5 dwellings) & 21/1719/FUL (1 dwelling) - Pegasus House, King Street, Honiton. This development lies outside the conservation area on the south side of King Street where the historic character is not defined by burgage plots. The three single storey dwellings face a 2 metre high wall at a distance of about 3 metres. Beyond the wall is a three storey block of flats with multiple windows at a distance of 8-9 metres. The bungalows are single aspect dwellings and have no private amenity space. In spite of this, all of the habitable rooms have an acceptable outlook, and compared to the current application, there is greater separation between the flats opposite and the windows in the approved dwellings.

17/0809/FUL - Land rear of Natwest Bank, Honiton. This development of four one- and two-storey dwellings is built right on the east boundary of the site with all of the living accommodation and windows facing west. The two single storey dwellings face a two storey building with a separation distance ranging from 2.65m to 3.85m. Notwithstanding the proximity, these dwellings have full size windows in all habitable rooms and sufficient access to light. Owing to the very close proximity, any views from the upper floor windows in the building opposite would be over the roof of the building and are unlikely to intrude on privacy.

The schemes identified by the agent therefore differ in various respects and do not justify allowing a proposal that would deliver poor living conditions for future occupants and harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Other matters

The buildings to the north, 98-104 High Street, are grade II listed, however, owing to the separation and the relative size of the development there would be no impact on their setting, complying with Policy EN9.

Although surrounded by dwellings, the proposal would not intrude on the privacy of any neighbouring dwelling. Furthermore, owing to its low roof and the existing stone walls surrounding the site it would have no negative effect on light or outlook enjoyed

by the occupants of surrounding properties and would satisfy Policy D1 in this regard.

Bin and bicycle storage areas have been indicated on the site plan and although there would be no parking on-site, it is not considered necessary in this location because of its proximity to amenities and public transport. The proposal would comply with Policy TC9 in this regard.

Surface water run-off would discharge to the main sewer and given the constrained nature of the site, this is likely to be the only viable solution and accord with Policy EN22.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The applicant has indicated on the application form that the proposal should be exempt from BNG requirements because it would be a self-build dwelling. However, they are not claiming a self-build exemption from CIL and the question on the application form about housing type indicates that the proposal is for market housing, not self-building housing. They have since confirmed that the proposal is not for a self-build dwelling and accordingly, they have provided the information necessary to satisfy BNG requirements.

The BNG assessment concludes there would be a percentage loss for 'area habitats' of -77.80 % (-0.02 units). This means that the proposal needs 0.04 habitat units to compensate for the loss, and to achieve a 10% net gain. Given the small site area and the type of habitats that need to be delivered to satisfy BNG requirements, this can only realistically be achieved off-site. The developer will therefore need to purchase credits from a suitable provider.

If the committee are minded to grant planning permission then it would need to be subject to a BNG condition.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, irrespective of whether the harm to its significance is substantial or less than substantial. Paragraph 208 requires the less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The scheme would undoubtedly offer social and economic benefits that are also public benefits. Benefits would arise from the delivery of housing, increasing the choice of homes available, and contributing to the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes. Further benefits would arise from the dwelling's location, as future occupiers would support local services and facilities in the town centre, with good access to public transport options. There would also be temporary economic benefits during the construction phase.

However, the public benefits associated with a single property would be modest. Furthermore, in this scheme, the benefits come at the expense of the living

conditions of future occupiers and this is a significant disadvantage of the proposed design. Taken together, the cumulative weight of benefits would be moderate and not sufficient to outweigh the great weight that the conservation of a designated heritage asset carries or the requirement to provide high quality living conditions. The proposal therefore fails to accord with the historic environment protection and amenity policies of the NPPF.

Owing to the poor living conditions that the scheme would deliver and the harm to the conservation area, the proposed development would conflict with Policies EN10 and D1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 135 of the NPPF. Policy EN10 is consistent with the NPPF where it identifies that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Policy D1 is consistent where it identifies that development should be designed to be sympathetic to local character and history and deliver a high standard of amenity. As such, significant weight can be afforded to the conflict of the proposal with these policies.

Following the publication of the revised NPPF in December 2024, the Council is unable to demonstrate the necessary 5-year supply of housing. This means that paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged. In such circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless either (i) the harm to the conservation area provides a strong reason for refusal, or (ii) the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

In this case, given the limited public visibility and the small scale of the proposal, the harm to the conservation area on its own would not be a strong enough reason to refuse the application. However, as set out above, the benefits of delivering one dwelling in an accessible location would not outweigh the combined harm to the living conditions of future occupiers and the harm to the conservation area. Furthermore, if the applicant is willing to engage with the Council, there is potential for both of these concerns to be overcome, delivering a high quality development and all the associated benefits.

In conclusion, the proposal conflicts with the Local Plan, and the material considerations, including the NPPF, do not indicate that the application should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. By virtue of the loss of open space resulting from the proposal, along with the cumulative loss resulting from recent developments on land near to the application site, the proposal would diminish the significance of the Honiton Conservation Area which is in part derived from the open spaces woven into the historic remains of the burgage plots at the rear of the High Street. Furthermore, owing to the unsympathetic design of the dwelling, in terms of its footprint and roof form, the proposal fails to respond to the established pattern and character of development in the immediate area. As such, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Honiton Conservation

Area and therefore would be contrary to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended). In the absence of sufficient public benefits to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified, the development is contrary to Policies D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness and EN10 - Conservation Areas of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 and guidance in National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

2. The proposal would fail to provide a high standard of amenity for future occupants owing to the outdoor amenity space and the windows serving the kitchen/living room being overlooked at close range from the windows of adjacent properties. In addition, the smallest bedroom would have a restricted outlook and limited access to light, thereby resulting in poor living conditions for future occupants. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 and the provisions of Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative:

In accordance with the aims of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 East Devon District Council seeks to work positively with applicants to try and ensure that all relevant planning concerns have been appropriately resolved; however, in this case the development is considered to be fundamentally unacceptable such that the Council's concerns could not be overcome through negotiation.

Plans relating to this application:

141/001 A	Location Plan	04.10.24
141/003 A	Proposed Combined Plans	04.10.24
141/004	Proposed Site Plan	04.10.24

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.

Statement on Human Rights and Equality Issues

Human Rights Act:

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been

balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

Equality Act:

In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty and Section 149. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief (or lack of), sex and sexual orientation.