

Ward Dunkeswell And Otterhead

Reference 25/1279/OUT

Applicant Mr M Hale (All Trust)

Location Honiton Inn Awliscombe Honiton EX14 3PJ

Proposal Demolition of existing public house and erection of 5 dwellings (Outline planning application with all matters reserved)



RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions

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		Committee Date: 21.10.2025
Dunkeswell And Otterhead (Awliscombe)	25/1279/OUT	Target Date: 05.09.2025
Applicant:	Mr M Hale (All Trust)	
Location:	Honiton Inn Awliscombe	
Proposal:	Demolition of existing public house and erection of 5 dwellings (Outline planning application with all matters reserved)	

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposal seeks outline planning permission for the demolition of the Honiton Inn in Awliscombe and the construction of five residential dwellings. All matters are reserved, meaning the application focuses solely on the principle of development and whether the site can accommodate the proposed scale.

The site lies within the historic core of the village, adjacent to several listed buildings, and is currently occupied by a disused public house that has been marketed extensively without success. Evidence submitted demonstrates that the pub is no longer viable, with no formal offers received despite outreach, and no interest shown by the local community in acquiring it as a village asset.

The Parish Council supports the demolition but considers five dwellings excessive, preferring a reduced scheme. The ward member and public representations raise concerns about overdevelopment, parking, access, and drainage. However, technical consultees, including the Highway Authority, Environmental Health, Conservation, Ecology, and Archaeology, have not objected, subject to appropriate conditions.

The site qualifies as brownfield land, and its redevelopment aligns with national planning policy which encourages the reuse of such land. Although the site lies outside a Built-up Area Boundary and is in a location with limited services, the Council's housing land supply shortfall triggers the tilted balance under the National Planning Policy Framework, meaning any harm must significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The proposed development is considered to have a materially different impact compared to previously dismissed appeals in the area due to its smaller scale,

central village location, and brownfield status. The indicative layout suggests a design that could reflect the local vernacular and maintain the character of the village, though detailed design will be addressed at the reserved matters stage. Ecological surveys confirm the presence of a bat roost, and appropriate mitigation measures are proposed. Surface water drainage will be managed through sustainable methods, and foul water connection is feasible. Heritage impacts are acknowledged, but the building's poor condition and lack of viable reuse support redevelopment, provided design respects the setting of nearby listed buildings.

While the proposal conflicts with certain spatial policies of the Local Plan, the benefits of redeveloping brownfield land, addressing housing need, and the lack of demonstrable harm from the loss of the community facility weigh in favour of approval. Accordingly, the officer recommendation is to approve the application, subject to conditions securing ecological mitigation, drainage, construction management, and heritage protection.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Dunkeswell And Otterhead - Cllr Yehudi Levine

A couple of thoughts after visiting the site. It seems to me that the construction of 5 houses is an overdevelopment of the site. Moreover, I consider the site to be an unsustainable location.

I find this an odd application in that it harps on the lack of housing land supply as its main argument. At least that is how it comes over. The impression it creates with me is that the applicants have seen an opportunity to realise hope value and this is reinforced by the inappropriate house design - yes, I know it is a reserved matter - which does not fit into the vernacular.

I buy into the argument that it is unlikely that the public house can be resurrected, but the question I have is whether the villagers were given the opportunity to purchase the site as a village asset.

On the whole I cannot support this application.

I would like to add that I am willing to change my mind if more information is provided.

Parish/Town Council

The Parish Council have no objections to the demolition of the Public House.

However we feel that the application for Five dwellings is too many for the site..

Ideally we would prefer Two dwellings adjacent to the highway, replacing the original building, but set back from the road, and one single story dwelling at the top of the rear garden.

Technical Consultations (in summary)

South West Water has confirmed that the applicant's proposed method of surface water disposal—discharge into the ground via infiltration—is acceptable and complies with the Run-off Destination Hierarchy. The applicant has demonstrated that higher-priority drainage options have been considered and that infiltration is the most practicable solution for the site.

Environmental Health requires that a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) be submitted and approved prior to commencement of works. The CEMP must address air quality, dust, water quality, lighting, noise, vibration, pollution prevention, and monitoring, and must be implemented throughout the development. Construction hours are restricted to 8am–6pm Monday to Friday and 8am–1pm on Saturdays, with no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Burning on site and the use of high-frequency audible reversing alarms are prohibited, to protect the amenity of nearby residents from noise, air, water, and light pollution.

Conservation - The Honiton Inn (also known as the Awliscombe Inn) is an unlisted historic village inn with social and architectural significance, located within the historic core of Awliscombe and adjacent to several Grade II listed buildings. While the building has been heavily altered and is currently in poor condition, it still contributes positively to the character and setting of the village and nearby heritage assets. If it is accepted that the business is no longer viable and all alternative options have been adequately explored, sensitive redevelopment of the site is reluctantly supported. Any redevelopment should carefully consider the impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings, with building orientation, design, scale, and materials reflecting the local vernacular. The use of natural local stone is supported, but further amendments to design details and bin store locations are recommended. There are no objections on heritage grounds, subject to these comments.

Ecology - The application is supported by appropriate ecological surveys, which confirm the presence of a common pipistrelle bat day roost. Demolition will require a European protected species licence, and the proposed mitigation measures, including integrated bat tubes, are considered suitable. Other ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are proportionate to the scale of development. Biodiversity net gain will need to be achieved through offsite measures, as the site design does not allow for sufficient onsite gains. A Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved before development commences. There are no predicted significant impacts on designated sites, habitats, or protected species. It is recommended that the development proceeds in accordance with the submitted ecological reports and that compliance is demonstrated prior to occupation, including the installation of integrated bat and bird boxes, insect bricks, and hedgehog highways.

Archaeology – The site lies within the historic core of Awliscombe, close to several listed buildings, and involves the demolition of a public house of historic interest. The Historic Environment Officer advises that demolition and groundworks may expose historic building fabric and archaeological deposits. To mitigate this, a programme of historic building recording and archaeological work should be secured through a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), to be approved prior to commencement. This

will ensure appropriate investigation, recording, and analysis of any heritage assets affected by the development, in accordance with national and local policy. A further condition is recommended to secure post-excavation analysis and reporting. There is no objection subject to these requirements.

County Highway Authority - Is satisfied that the proposed development will not result in an increase in vehicle trip generation compared to the existing Honiton Inn. If approved, secure cycle storage should be provided to encourage sustainable travel, and a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should be required to mitigate construction impacts on the highway network. The CEMP should address construction hours, traffic management, material storage, staff parking, and protection of the public highway. Details of secure cycle and scooter storage must also be approved prior to development, in accordance with the East Devon Local Plan.

South West Water - advises that surface water run-off should be managed in line with the drainage hierarchy, prioritising water re-use and infiltration where possible. Discharge to the public combined sewer is not acceptable unless all preferred options have been clearly demonstrated as impracticable. The applicant should provide evidence that the hierarchy has been properly addressed and agree the disposal method for highway run-off with the Highway Authority.

Other Representations

To date there have been 2 objections received and 3 neutral representations (in summary);

Objections

- Visual improvement acknowledged, but concerns raised about developer motives and profit-driven design.
- Housing type not suited to local needs;
- insufficient parking likely.
- Access/egress issues need addressing.
- Safety concerns due to proximity to main footpath used by schoolchildren.
- Refuse collection logistics unclear; potential obstruction on pavement.
- Existing approved development on Greenway Lane not yet built;
- cumulative impact on road access.
- Overdevelopment concerns:
- 7 homes already approved nearby; 5 more seen as excessive.
- Suggests reducing number of properties and opening up site frontage for better visibility and safety.
- Drainage infrastructure inadequate;
- stormwater runoff already problematic during heavy rain.

Neutral

- Farm cows regularly travel on the road near the proposed site.
- Farm entrance directly opposite development.
- Recommends fencing to prevent cows from entering residential gardens.
- Supports redevelopment of the existing property.
- Emphasises need for adequate parking: minimum 2 spaces per home, excluding garages.
- Suggests reducing number of homes if parking requirements cannot be met.

PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
04/P1780	New Dwelling	Refusal	08.09.2004

POLICIES

Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies

Strategy 1 (Spatial Strategy for Development in East Devon) Adopted
 Strategy 3 (Sustainable Development) Adopted
 Strategy 5 (Environment) Adopted
 Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside) Adopted
 Strategy 27 (Development at the Small Towns and Larger Villages) Adopted
 Strategy 32 (Resisting Loss of Employment, Retail and Community Sites and Buildings) Adopted
 Strategy 34 (District Wide Affordable Housing Provision Targets) Adopted
 Strategy 43 (Open Space Standards) Adopted
 Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs) Adopted
 Strategy 47 (Nature Conservation and Geology) Adopted
 Strategy 48 (Local Distinctiveness in the Built Environment) Adopted
 Strategy 50 (Infrastructure Delivery) Adopted
 D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) Adopted
 D2 (Landscape Requirements) Adopted
 D3 (Trees and Development Sites) Adopted
 EN5 (Wildlife Habitats and Features) Adopted
 EN14 (Control of Pollution) Adopted
 EN19 (Adequacy of Foul Sewers and Adequacy of Sewage Treatment System) Adopted
 EN22 (Surface Run-Off Implications of New Development) Adopted
 E14 (Change of Use of Village Shops or Services) Adopted
 TC2 (Accessibility of New Development) Adopted
 TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access) Adopted
 TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development) Adopted

Draft East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042 Policies

Strategic Policy SP01 (Spatial strategy) Draft
 Strategic Policy SP02 (Levels of future housing development) Draft
 Strategic Policy SP06 (Development beyond Settlement Boundaries) Draft

Strategic Policy SP07 (Delivery of infrastructure) Draft
Strategic Policy AR01 (Flooding) Draft
Strategic Policy SE04 (Resisting the loss of employment sites) Draft
Policy SE08 (Local shops and services) Draft
Strategic Policy DS01 (Design and local distinctiveness) Draft
Policy DS02 (Housing density and efficient use of land) Draft
Strategic Policy TR01 (Prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport) Draft
Policy TR04 (Parking standards) Draft
Strategic Policy OL01 (Landscape features) Draft
Strategic Policy OL02 (National Landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)) Draft
Policy OL09 (Control of pollution) Draft
Strategic Policy PB05 (Biodiversity Net Gain) Draft
Policy PB07 (Ecological enhancement and biodiversity in the built environment) Draft
Policy PB08 (Tree, hedges and woodland on development sites) Draft
Policy CF02 (Loss of community facilities) Draft

Government Planning Documents

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended)
National Planning Policy Guidance

Site Location and Description

Awliscombe is a village that has a primary school, church and village hall. Its public house, the site on which this planning applications takes place is not currently open for business and has been for sale since June 2023. These current and former everyday facilities serve the village residents from the concentrated area of the village. This site could be said to occupy the heart of the village.

The nearest main settlement to Awliscombe is Honiton, which lies some 2km in a broadly south-easterly direction.

Proposed Development

The proposal seeks outline consent for the demolition of the existing pub and the creation of 5 dwellings. All matters have been reserved meaning that this proposal concerns itself only with the principle of the development and that the site can accommodate the quantum of development proposed.

Indicative plans have been submitted in order to demonstrate that the quantum of the development proposed could be accommodated within the confines of the application site.

Site drainage would be in the form of soakaways and connections to SWW mains infrastructure which runs under the adjacent main road would provide a foul water connection.

ANALYSIS

The main issues concerning this proposal are;

- Policy Context
- Access to Services and Facilities
- Impact on the National Landscape (AONB)
- Design, Character and Appearance
- Loss of a Community Facility
- Parking and Highway Safety
- Ecology
- Final and Surface Water Drainage
- Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

The development plan for the area comprises the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 (adopted 2016) (Local Plan) and East Devon Villages Plan (2018). Strategy 1 of the Local Plan sets the target of a minimum of 17,100 new homes over the plan period and sets the distribution strategy of focussing most development in the seven main towns of East Devon to serve their own needs and the needs of surrounding rural areas. It also sets out how development in smaller towns, villages and rural areas will be geared to meeting local needs.

Strategy 27 sets out a list of villages of varying size and character which are considered to offer a range of accessible services and facilities to meet many of the everyday needs of local residents, including reasonable public transport. The Strategy text also goes on to refer to the 'Built-up Area Boundary' (BUAB) that each will have defined in the Villages Plan, though it is clarified that none will have any specific allocations. Awliscombe is not a village listed in Strategy 27 and therefore, does not have a BUAB.

Strategy 7 of the Local Plan indicates that all areas outside of BUABs are in the countryside and that development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy that explicitly permits such and where it would not harm the respective area's distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities.

Strategy 5B and Policy TC2 of the Local Plan seek for development to be located so as to be accessible, efficient and safe by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and also well related to compatible land uses so as to minimise the need to travel by car.

There is no 'made' neighbourhood plan in place.

The proposal would result in growth of a village with limited facilities that does not have a BUAB, in a location where the development plan does not identify future residential growth. Furthermore, the scheme is not specifically supported or promoted by the community as a means to meet its future needs. The proposal therefore conflicts with

Local Plan strategies 1, 7, 27, 5B and policy TC2 of the Local Plan in respect of its scale, location and access to facilities.

Access to service and facilities

As referenced above Awliscombe does not feature a BUAB and is not proposed to have one under the emerging local plan. Therefore, is it not identified as having the attributes necessary to sustain future residential growth. The settlement does feature a school, hall, church and bus stop, all of which are within walking distance of this site which is situated in the core of the settlement.

It is noted that the recent Hillcrest appeal (ref APP/U1105/W/25/3361389 for 20 dwellings - amongst other acts of development) was dismissed with the Inspector noting that development was not in a location with suitable access to services and facilities meaning reliance on private vehicles. There are two main material differences between that appeal (dismissed) and this current proposal - the location and scale of development.

The Hillcrest location was further away from the village core and without suitable pavements and pedestrian links. Additionally, the scale of the proposal meant that the amount of movements would result in a higher level of harm. It is considered that this proposal, for five dwellings, has a materially different impact on its environs which needs to be taken into account. Another material departure is that the Hillcrest appeal took place on a greenfield site, where at least some of this site on the former pub, would be brownfield land. The NPPF advises on how brownfield development should be taken into account which will need to be explored in the overall planning balance.

In terms of planning balance in the instance of Hillcrest the tilted balance was disengaged by virtue of the identified harm on the National Landscape (AONB). The planning balance will return to this element once the impact on the National Landscape has been assessed.

Impact on the National Landscape (AONB)

The AONB designation lies to the north and northeast is approximately 85 metres from the application site at its nearest point.

The designation covers the surrounding agricultural land and stops short of the built form of the settlement. The natural qualities that lead to its designation include the characteristic of the wider Landscape Character Type 3 (LCT) 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes in that it is an agricultural landscape with a village, set on a gently rolling landscape, with patches of woodland and hedgerow trees, and long views towards the surrounding landscape.

The development of the application site, within the core of the village and built upon previously developed land, would not adversely affect these natural qualities or their appreciation from the public realm. There is built form in-between the site and the

National Landscape designation meaning this development would not impinge or adversely affect this designations setting.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with strategy 46 in and would not adversely impact on its setting.

Design, Character and appearance

Appearance and layout are reserved matters to be considered at a later date. Nevertheless, given the site perimeter and quantum development sought this makes any other development aside from that indicated on the illustrative layout difficult in terms of general layout.

The submitted illustrative plans show three dwellings by the main road, occupying the approximate footprint of the existing pub, with two dwellings situated further back occupying the narrower area of this plot. The three dwellings occupying the road would present an active frontage that would be expected to face the main through route. The illustrative plans show that each of these three dwellings would be detached. To be clear, at reserved matters stage it would be more harmonious and reflective of the surrounds if these dwellings were joined to form a cohesive terrace.

The two northern most dwellings, likewise, would also benefit from forming a pair of semi-detached properties. Appearance is a reserved matter, but care would have to be taken to ensure that no opening would create overlooking into the private garden areas of the adjacent properties. However, there is no reason why this would not be possible and thereby protect residential amenity with a sensitive design.

In keeping an active frontage, occupying the approximate footprint of the pub, it would maintain the local distinctiveness and character. The two dwellings situated further back from the road would likely have sufficient amenity space and not appear impinged or restricted. Appearance at the reserved matters will be important but there is no reason at this stage to suggest a suitable layout could not be achieved.

Furthermore, at this outline stage there is no reason why a complementary design, which accounts for the privacy of adjacent properties, historic context and local vernacular could not be achieved.

Loss of a community facility

An assessment against Criterion 3 of Strategy 32 requires evidence that the options for retaining the Honiton Inn for its current or a similar use have been fully explored without success for a period exceeding 12 months, and that there is sufficient alternative provision in the locality. This strategy, critical for determining the permissibility of a change of use for a community facility such as a pub, requires that comprehensive efforts to maintain the existing function must be demonstrated as having failed over a sustained period, alongside evidence of alternative provisions serving the community's needs.

The marketing efforts for the Honiton Inn illustrate a dedicated, yet ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to secure its future as a public house. The property was placed on the open market for sale or lease, including a "try before you buy" option, for well over 12 months, commencing on 1 June 2023. Despite the widespread dissemination of marketing details to 7,405 potential parties, targeting a diverse array of restaurateurs, publicans (both private and corporate), and those seeking alternative uses, the response was minimal. Only 86 requests for details were received, leading to a mere four suitable viewings, and, crucially, no substantiated formal offers were made. This disparity between outreach and genuine interest strongly indicates a fundamental lack of market demand for the Honiton Inn as a viable pub business.

Furthermore, the owner has demonstrated a commitment and flexibility in his attempts to keep the pub operational. He had invested sums over the years to ensure the property remained a public house. Throughout previous tenancies, he offered financial incentives, including rent-free periods, suspended rent, agreed payment plans, and charged "NO rent during the whole of COVID and beyond." Repair obligations under the lease were also not enforced, granting tenants greater financial freedom to invest in the business as they deemed appropriate. The owner had successfully secured two sets of experienced tenants over a twelve-year period, yet neither was able to sustain the business, even during times when the market was considered stronger and more secure. The pub has now been closed for approximately 15 months, a direct consequence of these repeated failures and the ongoing lack of viable interest. Significantly, there was also no interest from any local community groups to purchase the pub, nor from managed house groups or corporate operators.

Feedback from the limited viewings illuminated the inherent challenges impacting the Honiton Inn's viability. Prospective operators cited the property's remote location in the rural village of Awliscombe, with its small population of 534 and absence of a daytime working population, as a significant drawback. Concerns were also raised regarding the substantial size of the property and its associated utility costs, a factor exacerbated by the wider economic trends affecting the pub sector, where businesses face up to a 43% increase in costs, including energy prices that are two to three times higher than pre-COVID levels.

The lack of adequate parking, with only two allocated spaces and a reliance on a village hall car park licence that has been breached, coupled with the potential loss of this car park (if a new village hall is built), presented a deterrent. The absence of recent trading figures, due to the pub being operated under lease and then closed, further complicated financial assessment for potential buyers. Attempts to diversify the pub's offerings through initiatives like open mic nights, quizzes, a cocktail bar, and operating as a food-led establishment, even with a newly installed kitchen, all "sadly failed" due to intense competition from other venues. This demonstrates that proactive measures to enhance the pub's appeal and financial performance were tried but proved unsustainable in its specific context.

Regarding the demonstration of surplus supply or provision in the locality, the evidence suggests that the community is not solely reliant on the Honiton Inn for its social and recreational needs. The presence of The Otter Inn just 1.3 miles away and The Drew Arms 3.5 miles distant offers alternative options for pub services. Moreover, the market town of Honiton, situated only 2.1 miles from Awliscombe, provides eight public

houses and numerous other restaurants and eateries, ensuring residents have access to a variety of choices. The success of The Otter Inn, described as a "quintessential English Inn in an idyllic country location," indicates that viable pub models exist in similar rural settings, but the Honiton Inn itself struggles to replicate this success due to its specific challenges. Crucially, the village also benefits from a dedicated village hall which serves "all community matters," fulfilling many of the social and community gathering functions that pubs often provide. Efforts to integrate other community services, such as a shop or post office, into the pub were marketed but received "no interest from the village," which instead relies on Honiton for such facilities. This comprehensive picture confirms that the loss of the Honiton Inn would not leave the local community "bereft" of essential social or pub facilities, as mandated by Strategy 32.

In summary, the efforts to market the Honiton Inn, the repeated failures of experienced tenants despite significant owner support, the specific and persistent operational challenges identified by prospective buyers, and the availability of alternative pub and community facilities within the immediate and wider locality, collectively provide a robust demonstration that Strategy 32 has been met. The evidence indicates that the Honiton Inn is not viable for continued use as a public house, meaning there would be no community harm arising from its loss. Redevelopment of this site is therefore consistent with strategy 32 of the local plan.

Parking and highway safety

The illustrative layout plans indicate that there would be two car parking spaces per dwelling. This would comply with policy TC9 of the local plan which states at least 1 car parking space should be provided for one-bedroom homes and 2 car parking spaces per home with two or more bedrooms.

A new access would be created which connects to the main road which passes through the settlement - the A373 in a location where the speed limit is restricted to 30 mph. The highway authority has been consulted on the proposal and are satisfied that the proposed development will not result in an increase in vehicle trip generation compared to the existing permitted use of the Honiton Inn. If planning permission is granted, it is recommended that secure cycle storage be provided to encourage sustainable travel and help reduce reliance on vehicle trips. Additionally, a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should be required to mitigate the impact of construction activities on the highway network.

Therefore, conditions should include a Construction Management Plan and details of secure cycle and scooter storage prior to commencement of development, in accordance with the East Devon Local Plan.

Ecology

The existing building supports a common pipistrelle bat day roost; demolition will require a European protected species licence. Proposed mitigation, including

integrated bat tubes, is suitable. Other ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are proportionate according to the districts ecologist.

No significant ecological impacts are predicted. If approved, a planning condition is recommended to secure delivery of all mitigation and enhancement measures, including integrated bat and bird boxes, insect bricks, and hedgehog highways, with compliance to be demonstrated prior to occupation.

The ecological information submitted (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Further Bat Survey, and Statutory Biodiversity Metric) is considered appropriate and proportionate for the scale of development.

Natural England can only issue a licence if the following tests have been met:

- the development is necessary for preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- the action will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Whilst decision makers should have regard to the 3 tests above it should be noted that the LPA is not expected to duplicate the licensing role of NE. An LPA should only refuse permission if the development is *unlikely* to be licensed pursuant to the derogation powers *and* Article 12 of the Habitats Directive was likely to be infringed.

In terms of public interest this proposal as a matter of principle accords with the national level of significantly boosting housing supply from which some economic and social benefits could accrue. Alternative scenarios are not easily discernible. The proposal would involve the re development of brownfield land in accordance with the thrust of national policy. Given what has been reported for this site and the fact suitable mitigation measures are proposed (found acceptable by the Councils ecologist) there is no reason why a license would not be issued (if one would be needed) or why Article 12 would be infringed.

Consequently, there is no reason to suggest that, from the LPA's perspective, the proposal would be likely to offend article 12 of the Habitat Directive or that a licence would be withheld by Natural England as a matter of principle.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric confirms baseline habitats are accurately recorded. As the site will be largely hardstanding and private gardens, offsite biodiversity gains will be required to achieve the 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) target.

A Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved before development commences, including allocation of any offsite habitats via the Natural England register.

Foul and Surface Water Drainage

LP policy EN19 states that new development will not be permitted unless a suitable foul sewage treatment system of adequate capacity and design is available or will be provided in time to serve the development. A map of the area has been provided by South West Water which shows infrastructure within the main road to accommodate foul water drainage - with no reason why connection should not be feasible.

LP policy EN22 states the surface water run-off implications of the proposal have been fully considered and found to be acceptable. The proposed drainage strategy for this residential development aligns closely with the principles enshrined in the NPPF and associated national guidance on sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), particularly the National Standards for SuDS (published June 2025). At its core, the NPPF seeks to advance sustainable development by ensuring that new developments do not exacerbate flood risks elsewhere which mandates the prioritisation of SuDS in managing surface water runoff to promote resilience against climate change and enhance environmental outcomes. This strategy's approach—incorporating source control via localised soakaways and crate trenches, permeable paving for parking areas, and conveyance through swales—adheres to the NPPF's emphasis on integrated, nature-based solutions that mimic natural hydrological processes, thereby reducing runoff volumes and velocities while improving water quality through pre-treatment features.

In line with the NPPF's flood risk management framework, the design incorporates robust attenuation measures tailored to a 1-in-100-year rainfall event with a 40% climate change allowance, directing excess flows to designated low points along the access road to safeguard dwelling thresholds and prevent downstream flooding. The scheme demonstrates that SuDS are feasible and proportionate to the site's scale. Furthermore, the positioning of infiltration features at least 5 metres from foundations and 1 metre above maximum groundwater levels adheres to the National SuDS Standards' requirements for geotechnical suitability and long-term functionality (Standard 3: Construction and Maintenance), mitigating risks of structural damage or groundwater contamination. The attenuated sub-base in permeable block paving, with optional underdrains only where essential, supports the standards' directive to manage the 'first flush' of 5mm rainfall on-site through interception or storage (Standard 2: Everyday Rainfall), fostering biodiversity net gain and urban cooling benefits as encouraged under NPPF.

The strategy's whole-site integration, from roof-level source control to linear swales for communal conveyance, reflects the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753, 2015) best practice endorsed by national guidance, ensuring benefits such as reduced erosion along access routes. By routing controlled discharges to swales for exfiltration rather than direct sewer connections, the design upholds the SuDS hierarchy prioritised in the NPPF—store, infiltrate, then slowly release—thus contributing to broader objectives of water resource efficiency and ecological improvement under the Environment Act 2021's biodiversity mandates. Overall, this approach not only satisfies the mandatory SuDS provisions for major developments but also positions the scheme as a model of forward-thinking resilience, with clear scope for maintenance arrangements via planning conditions to secure lifelong performance.

The scheme does not constitute as a major development and therefore DCC Lead Flood Authority were not required to be consulted.

Given the above the proposal is considered to accord with policies EN19 and EN22 of the local plan.

Impact on Heritage Assets

The Honiton Inn is an unlisted building, adjacent to the war memorial and village hall, near the Grade II listed George Park to the south-east, and opposite the Grade II listed 1 Redwoods and Dandelion Cottage.

The building is shown on the 1888-1890 OS map and has social significance as an historic village inn as well as some architectural interest as a vernacular building which is typical in style in this locality. Although it has been heavily altered over time with a modern roof covering and windows, internal alterations, demolition and extensions, the original façade and building form are still recognisable and some historic fabric survives. It forms part of a group within the historic core of the village and is prominent in this setting when viewed along the main road. In terms of the character of the village and setting of the nearby listed buildings, it makes a positive contribution. However, in its current condition it is considered to make a negative impact. If it is accepted that the business is no longer viable, the building has been marketed sufficiently and cannot be converted, and alternative options have been adequately assessed, then the sensitive redevelopment of the site is reluctantly accepted on balance.

In terms of the redevelopment of the site careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of the building designs and site layout on the setting of the listed buildings nearby. The orientation of the proposed dwellings, with front elevations facing the road and ridges running parallel to it, are characteristic of building within the village. Although this will be considered at reserved matters stage, a larger single property reminiscent of the existing building or short terrace facing the road would be more appropriate in this context rather than a row of detached houses. The indicative design, scale, materials and detailing should be amended to reflect the vernacular character of traditional buildings within the village, with the first-floor bays, gable bay window and hanging tiles omitted.

However, at outline stage with such matters such as layout and appearance for future consideration the proposal would not harm the setting of the nearby listed buildings, in accordance with the statutory duties under Section 66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990 and the heritage policies of the development plan.

Turning to the archaeological potential of the site - the proposed development lies within the historic core of Awliscombe which is recorded as 'Orescoma' in the Domesday Book of 1086.

The demolition works may expose historic building fabric, the examination and recording of which will add to the understanding of this heritage assets. Furthermore, any groundworks associated with the proposed development have the potential to expose and destroy archaeological and artefactual deposits associated with the

occupation of the historic buildings and the historic settlement at Awliscombe. The Historic Environment Team have therefore advised that the impact of development upon the historic buildings and any below-ground archaeological deposits should be mitigated by a programme of work that should investigate, record and analyse the historic building fabric and archaeological evidence that will otherwise be destroyed by the proposed development.

The County Historic Environment Team recommends that any consent for this application should include conditions requiring the submission and implementation of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for historic building recording and archaeological work, in line with paragraph 218 of the NPPF and Policy EN6 of the East Devon Local Plan, to ensure appropriate mitigation and compliance.

Planning Balance

The term "brownfield land" is synonymous with "previously developed land", which is defined in national policy as land that has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This includes sites with extensive areas of hardstanding or other fixed infrastructure. In this case, the siting of the (former) public house qualifies as brownfield land.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local planning authorities to take a proactive role in identifying and facilitating the redevelopment of suitable brownfield sites to meet development needs. Planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within settlements for housing and other identified needs. Proposals for such development should generally be approved unless they would result in significant harm.

Making effective use of land is a core objective of the NPPF. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy to meet development needs by maximising the use of previously developed land. This approach should only be set aside where it would conflict with other policies in the Framework, such as those protecting designated biodiversity sites. Accordingly, local planning authorities are expected to give substantial weight to the redevelopment of suitable brownfield land within settlements. A further material consideration is the Council's current housing land supply position. The Council can only demonstrate a 2.97-year supply of housing land, which falls short of the minimum 5-year requirement set out in the NPPF, including the necessary buffer.

This shortfall is significant and triggers the application of paragraph 11(d) of the Framework, which introduces the 'tilted balance' in favour of sustainable development. The decision-maker must consider whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework as a whole. Given this undersupply, the housing targets and overarching spatial strategy contained in Strategies 1, 7, 27, 5B and policy TC2 of the Local Plan carry limited weight in decision-making.

In this case, robust evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the loss of the community facility would not result in demonstrable harm. As such, this issue does not weigh against the proposal. Indeed, there are no objections from statutory consultees.

Applying the tilted balance, the conflict with the spatial elements of the development plan does not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. These benefits include the suitable redevelopment of brownfield land, which should be attributed substantial weight.

Accordingly, the officer recommendation is one of approval.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

(Reason - To comply with section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.)

2. Approval of the details of the layout, scale, access and appearance of the buildings and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.

(Reason : The application is in outline with one or more matters reserved).

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed at the end of this decision notice.

(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)

4. Prior to commencement of development the Local Planning Authority shall have received and approved a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) including:

(a) the timetable of the works;

(b) 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.

(c) hours during which delivery and construction traffic will travel to and from the site, with such vehicular movements and construction working hours being restricted to between 8:00am and 6pm Mondays to Fridays inc.; 8.00am to

1.00pm Saturdays, with no such vehicular movements or construction work taking place on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays;

(d) the number and sizes of vehicles visiting the site in connection with the development and the frequency of their visits and details of any road closures;

(e) the compound/location where all building materials, finished or unfinished products, parts, crates, packing materials and waste will be stored during the demolition and construction phases;

(f) areas on-site where delivery vehicles and construction traffic will load or unload building materials, finished or unfinished products, parts, crates, packing materials and waste with confirmation that no construction traffic or delivery vehicles will park on the County highway for loading or unloading purposes, unless prior written agreement has been given by the Local Planning Authority;

(g) hours during which no construction traffic will be present at the site;

(h) the means of enclosure of the site during construction works; and

(i) details of proposals to promote car sharing amongst construction staff in order to limit construction staff vehicles parking off-site

(j) details of wheel washing facilities and obligations

(k) The proposed route of all construction traffic exceeding 7.5 tonnes.

(l) Details of the amount and location of construction worker parking.

(m) There shall be no burning on site and no high frequency audible reversing alarms used on the site.

(n) The CEMP shall include at least the following matters : Air Quality, Dust, Water Quality, Lighting, Noise and Vibration, Pollution Prevention and Control, and Monitoring Arrangements

(Reason : To protect the amenities of existing and future residents in the vicinity of the site and to minimise the impact of the development on the highway network in accordance with policies TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access), D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) and EN14 (Control of Pollution) of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 and national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Planning Practice Guidance. A pre-commencement condition is required to ensure that the required works can be considered and delivered in advance of any increased traffic impacts associated with the development).

5. Prior to commencement of the development details of a water conservation and efficiency strategy shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall make provision for the use of water

butts of a minimum capacity of 110 litres per bedroom and these shall be installed and brought into use prior to first occupation of the dwellinghouse to which they relate and thereafter maintained and retained.

(Reason : In the interest of water conservation and to reduce potential surface water run-off from the site in line with policy EN22 (Surface Run-off Implications of New Development); SuDS for Devon Guidance (2017) and national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Planning Practice Guidance).

6. No dwelling approved as part of the permitted development shall be occupied until details of secure cycle/scooter storage facilities to serve it have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the dwelling(s) to which the storage facilities relate.

(Reason : To promote sustainable travel in accordance with Strategy 5B (Sustainable Transport) and policy TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development) of the East Devon Local Plan 2012-2031 and national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Planning Practice Guidance).

7. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Seasons Ecology, December 2024) and Further Bat Surveys Reports (Seasons Ecology, May 2025), in particular the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures detailed in Section 6 of the PEA and Section 5 of the bat survey report. The development shall not be first occupied until the local planning authority has been provided with a compliance report by a qualified ecologist, including photographs, demonstrating the following ecological mitigation and enhancement features have been installed, including:

- a. integrated bat boxes (1 per dwelling)
- b. integrated bird boxes (1 per dwelling)
- c. insect bricks (1 per dwelling)
- d. hedgehog highways [13 cm² holes at ground level every 5 m]

(Reason: To ensure the development mitigates any impacts on protected species and enhances habitat potential in accordance with Strategy 47 (Nature Conservation and Geology), Policy EN5 (Wildlife Habitats and Features) and Policy EN14 (Control of Pollution) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031.)

8. The development shall be carried out in accordance with;

The aboricultural impact assessment - ARBTECH AIA 01
The tree survey - ARBTECH TPP 01
The aboricultural method statement

All conducted by arbtech and received by the Local Planning Authority 16th June 2025.

(Reason - To ensure that the development does not adversely impact trees within and surrounding the site, in accordance with policy D3 (Trees and Development Sites) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan).

9. The surface water drainage hereby approved shall be constructed prior to the first occupation of any dwelling and be maintained for the lifetime of the development.

(Reason – To ensure that there is adequate means of surface water to serve the development, in accordance with policy EN22 (Surface Run-Off Implications of New Development) of the Adopted East Devon Local Plan).

10. No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in accordance with the approved scheme as agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(Reason: 'To ensure, in accordance with Policy EN6 (Nationally and Locally Important Archaeological Sites) of the East Devon Local Plan and paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), that an appropriate record is made of the historic building fabric and archaeological evidence that may be affected by the development.

11. The development shall not be brought into its intended use until (i) the post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation and (ii) that the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results, and archive deposition, has been confirmed in writing to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority.

(Reason - To comply with Paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which requires the developer to record and advance understanding of the significance of heritage assets, and to ensure that the information gathered becomes publicly accessible).

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative:

In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 in determining this application, East Devon District Council has worked positively with the applicant to ensure that all relevant planning concerns have been appropriately resolved.

Biodiversity Net Gain Informative:

Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 means that this planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to "the biodiversity gain condition" (BG condition).

The Local Planning Authority cannot add this condition directly to this notice as the condition has already been applied by law. This informative is to explain how the biodiversity condition applies to your development.

The BG conditions states that **development may not begin unless:**

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BG plan) has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the BG plan.

In this case the planning authority you must submit the BG Plan to is East Devon District Council.

There are some exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed below.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

1. The application for planning permission was made before 12 February 2024.
2. The planning permission relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 applies (planning permission for development already carried out).
3. The planning permission was granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and
 - (i) the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates was granted before 12 February 2024; or
 - (ii) the application for the original planning permission* to which the section 73 planning permission relates was made before 12 February 2024.
4. The permission which has been granted is for development which is exempt being:
 - 4.1 Development which is not 'major development' (within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) where:
 - i) the application for planning permission was made before 2 April 2024;

- ii) planning permission is granted which has effect before 2 April 2024; or
- iii) planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where the original permission to which the section 73 permission relates* was exempt by virtue of (i) or (ii).

4.2 Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:

- i) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- ii) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

4.3 Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

4.4 Development of a biodiversity gain site, meaning development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the Biodiversity Gain Planning condition which applies in relation to another development, (no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee).

4.5 Self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- i) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- ii) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- iii) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

Where there are losses or deterioration to irreplaceable habitats a bespoke compensation package needs to be agreed with the planning authority, in addition to the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

For information on how to prepare and submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan please use the following link: Submit a biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Plans relating to this application:

273.000.01	Location Plan	25.06.25
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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.