

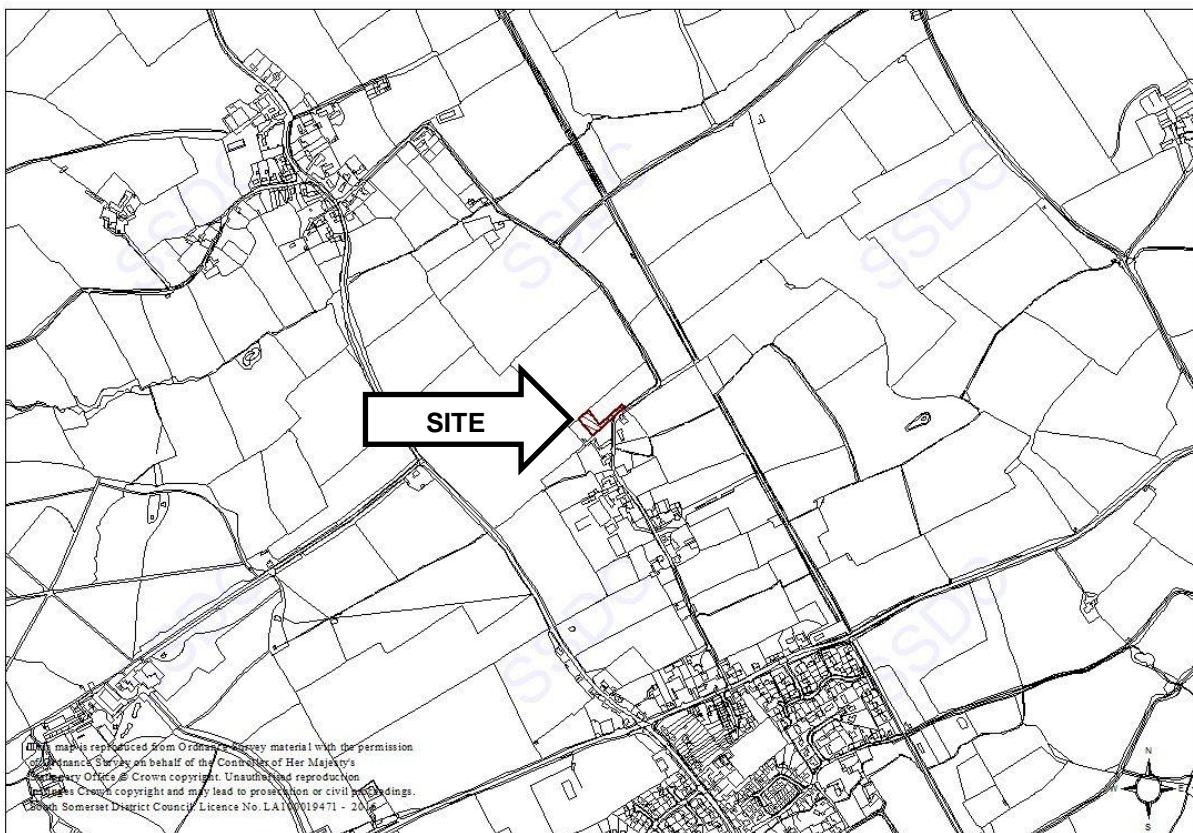
## Officer Report On Planning Application: 16/03158/OUT

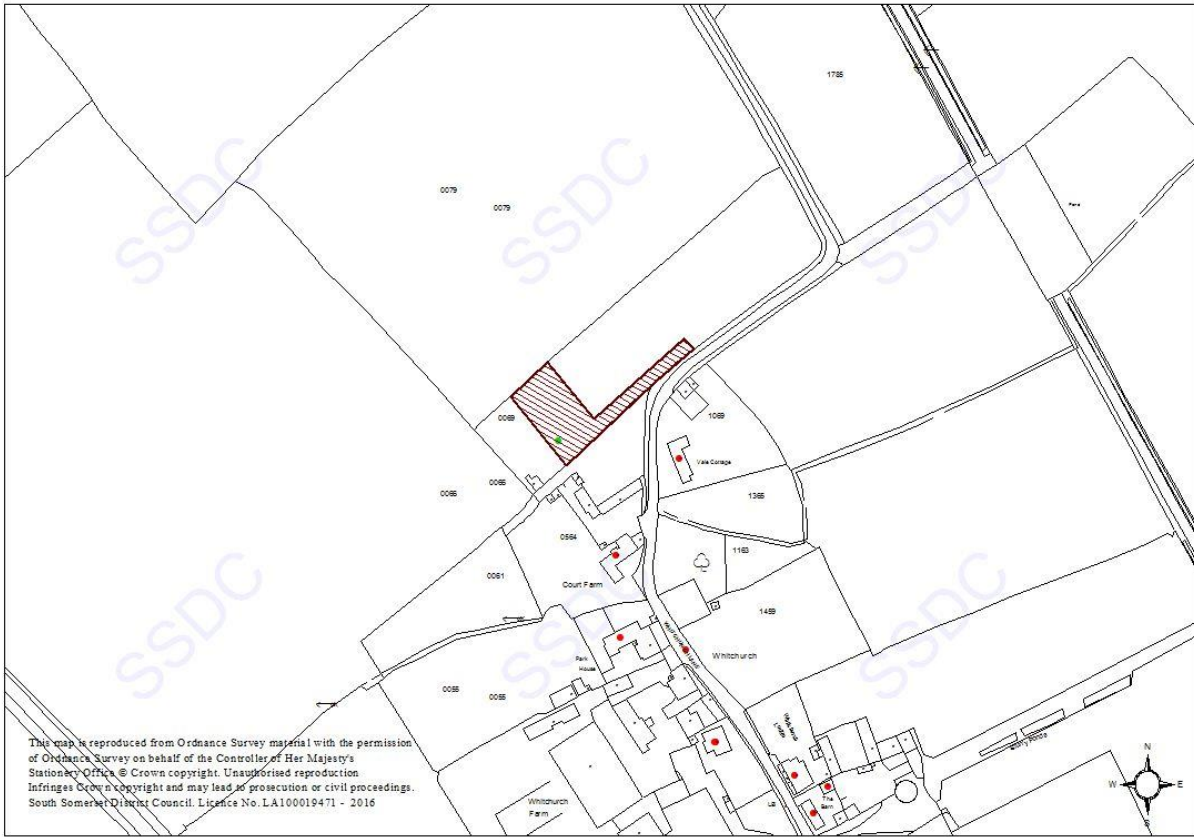
<b>Proposal :</b>	Erection of affordable dwelling for elderly persons
<b>Site Address:</b>	Land OS 0069 Whitechurch Lane Henstridge
<b>Parish:</b>	Henstridge
<b>BLACKMOOR VALE Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Cllr Tim Inglefield Cllr William Wallace
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Lee Walton Tel: (01935) 462324 Email: lee.walton@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	15th September 2016
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr & Mrs Alan and Julia Raymond
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	Michael Williams Sanderley Studio Kennel Lane Langport TA10 9SB
<b>Application Type :</b>	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

### REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to the committee at the request of the Ward Members with the agreement of the Area Chairman to enable the comments of the Parish Council and local support to be fully debated.

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The application site is in countryside at the northern edge of the hamlet of Whitechurch that is located north of the A30. The site is on elevated land within the western portion of a long rectangular agricultural field with views out over the countryside to the north and west. The County Council's definitive map identifies a public right of way (footpath) that passes on the eastern side of the application site where there is also a loose box associated with the agricultural notification ref: 16/00559/AGN determined 07/03/2016.

The proposal seeks the erection of an affordable dwelling for elderly persons that includes the widening of an existing field access.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement.

## RELEVANT HISTORY

16/00559/AGN - The creation of convenient access up a slope to an existing agricultural building and an associated hardstanding, Permission not required 07/03/2016.

## POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF state that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the local planning authority considers that the adopted development plan comprises the policies of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 2028 (adopted March 2015).

Policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

SD1 - Sustainable Development  
SS1 - Settlement Strategy  
SS5 - Delivering New Housing Growth  
TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development  
TA6 - Parking Standards  
EQ2 - General development

Regard shall also be had to:

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012):  
Chapter 4 - Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 6 - Delivering a choice of high quality homes  
Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design  
Chapter 8 - Promoting Healthy Communities  
Chapter 11 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

National Planning Policy Guidance

Other Relevant Documents

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy, adopted March 2012 and re-adopted September 2012 following corrections made.

Somerset Highways Standing Advice - June 2015.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Henstridge Parish Council** - The application should be approved only if it is subject to a S106 restriction requiring the owner of the property to be of retirement age, that the building is constructed of local materials and that the roofline is single storey.

**County Public Rights of Way** - As of the 26 September 2016 a response was not received.

**County Archaeologist** - No objections

**SSDC Ecologist** - I don't have any comments or recommendations to make.

**County Highway Authority** - standing advice applies to consider visibility, parking and turning.

**SSDC Highway Consultant** - Consider sustainability issues (transport). The traffic impact on the approach road is unlikely to be significant. I would support the widening of the existing access to 6.0m. The south-westerly visibility splay needs to be drawn to a tangential point to avoid any blind spots. The first 6.0m of access should be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone/gravel) and measures should be implemented to ensure surface water does not discharge onto the public highway. If permitted, on-site parking provision should accord with SPS standards.

**SSDC Landscape Architect** - The proposal site lays within a small field at the edge of the hamlet of Whitechurch, which lays to the north of Henstridge. The hamlet is characterised by a loose cluster of farm buildings and individual dwellings, interspersed in places by agricultural land in the form of small paddocks and meadowland, and it is within a paddock at the north edge of the hamlet, marginally outside the settlement's built form, that this proposal for a dwelling is intended. The wider context of both the site and the hamlet is countryside.

There are few residences in the hamlet, and most of those present assume traditional form. As

noted, in places small paddocks and garden spaces, along with farm buildings intersperse the house forms, to contribute to local distinctiveness. The application site is bounded by an established hedgerow to the south, which currently demarcates the hamlet's built extent, and its pasture directly links with the wider landscape of the Blackmore Vale. I view the introduction of a house form into this paddock to adversely impact upon local character, in that it erodes the open setting of the hamlet as experienced from the north; it introduces a locally uncharacteristic house form to the hamlet; it extends beyond the hamlet's historic bounds; and will necessitate the hedge being further breached to create an enlarged site access. As such, I consider the site to fail to conserve and enhance local character & distinctiveness, and thus do not see this application as meeting the objectives of LP policy EQ2.

**SSDC Tree Officer** - The group of young Sycamores adjoining the lane and access drive are far enough away not to be affected by the proposal, so I have no arboricultural objections. The location is quite elevated, exposed and rural, so if a consent were to be granted, it might be considered appropriate to ensure the establishment of, through a condition, new trees and shrubs to help soften the appearance of built-form.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

There have been four householder notification letters received of which three support the proposal and one objects.

The letters of support argue:

- Mr Raymond has lived and worked in Henstridge all of his life
- They wish to retire and build a retirement bungalow for themselves
- Farming is constantly changing and economically it can be a dicey business
- The Raymonds want to continue to farm for the foreseeable future
- There is no negative impact on any neighbours or the environment

The objection is concerned that:

- The road is a quiet narrow country lane
- Poor access from Whitechurch Lane onto the busy A30
- Gradual erosion of this countryside would be a great loss to the wellbeing of everyone

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

The principle of development is sought with all matters reserved at this stage. Contrary to the applicant's Planning Statement the hamlet of Whitechurch is considered not part of a sustainable location, being located north of the A30 and detached from Henstridge the nearest Policy SS2 settlement considered to support sustainable development. No justification or exceptional circumstance is offered in support of the proposal and given the location the role of the council's lack of a five year housing land supply attracts limited weight. The proposal is considered contrary to paragraph 55 of the NPPF and accordingly it is considered that there is no 'in principle' support. There is the need to consider any material considerations.

### **Character and Appearance (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale):**

The application site is located on north-westerly sloping ground with views across the adjacent landscape. The adjacent built form is considered largely screened from the north by the change in land levels so that the application site is much more conspicuously located. Despite the 'illustrative' detail that identifies a single storey dwelling this would introduce urban built form to the locality whose presence, what with the enlarged access point and associated drive

would visually engage with the viewer off-site. The Landscape Architect's response is not supportive of the proposal that fails to conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness contrary to Policy EQ2.

**Highway Safety (Access):**

Notwithstanding that access is a reserved matter it is evident that an acceptable access arrangement can come forward and that sufficient space is available on site to provide for parking and turning. The proposal is considered generally accords with the highways' standing advice.

**Neighbour Amenity:**

While a reserved matter it is considered that the proposal would not unacceptably harm the residential amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties by disturbing, interfering with or overlooking such properties.

**Other Matters:**

The Parish Council's support is conditional and dependent on age restricted occupancy although the applicant goes further to suggest the property when put up for sale is offered first to people with clear connections to Henstridge parish before being put on the open market, accepting a legal agreement to secure the objective. The problem with the approach is necessarily the lack of third party interest at the time of sale to monitor and secure the arrangement in the long term. There is also a concern that with regard to an age related occupancy condition that given the location, as one grows older and more dependent, remote from the services and facilities that are increasingly relied on, there is still greater pressures on the provider of such services, to the detriment of wider society.

The applicant refers to Henstridge as a 'short distance' (para.3.12) to the south although there is a minimum distance of 600 metres to the Henstridge development boundary that is without benefit of footpaths or street lighting, while pedestrians would need to negotiate the narrowed shared entry from the A30 prior to arriving at Henstridge's outer edge. The overall distance to the centre of Henstridge is a minimum of 1.2km. The proposed dwelling with its age restricted occupancy condition either makes occupants increasingly reliant on the private car or else makes for increasingly isolated occupancy.

The proposal seeks to support a local agricultural worker although no attempt is made to provide an essential need justification, while it also hints at retirement for which policy does not and never has supported dwellings for retired farmers. The proposal therefore is considered in terms of an additional new build dwelling in the countryside.

**Concluding Remarks:**

The application site is well away from the nearest policy SS2 settlement that suggests the proposal involves an unsustainable location. The Council's lack of a five year housing land supply, noted above, results in there being less weight attached to restrictive housing policy, but in considering the site's countryside location its lack of sustainable location attracts great weight in the decision making process.

There is also the visual harm to character and appearance in locating a new dwelling within the site that is on elevated land and clearly separated visually from the adjacent built form that otherwise is largely screened by the adjacent changes in land level. In considering the unsustainable location and the adverse harm that arises in terms of character and appearance the proposal is considered contrary to paragraph 55 of the NPPF and local plan policy EQ2.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse

**FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

01. The proposal involves new residential development in the countryside, for which an overriding essential need has not been justified. The application site is too much removed from the village edge of the nearest settlement considered a sustainable settlement location. By virtue of distance and lack of safe means of pedestrian access, the application site is poorly related to local services and as such will increase the need for journeys to be made by private vehicles. This identified harm is not outweighed by the contribution of the proposal towards the supply of housing in the district or by any other benefit arising from the scheme. The proposed development therefore constitutes unsustainable development that is contrary to policies SD1, SS1 and SS2 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006- 2028 and to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraph 55.
02. The proposal by reason of its siting would erode the open setting of the hamlet as experienced from the north; it extends beyond the hamlet's historic bounds; and necessitates the roadside hedge being further breached to support an enlarged access to the detriment of local character and distinctiveness contrary to Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006- 2028.

**Informatives:**

01. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;
  - offering a pre-application advice service, and
  - as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions

In this case, the applicant/agent did not take the opportunity to enter into pre-application discussions.