

## Planning, Design & Access Statement

Land rear of the Bell Inn

Frome Road

Rode

BA11 6PW

November 2022

Prepared by

Caldecotte Group

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**Site •**

Land rear of the Bell  
Frome Road  
Rode  
BA11 6PW

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**Report for •**

Wellington Pub Company

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**Document revisions •**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Caldecotte Group in order to support a planning application for three dwellings on land to the rear of the Bell in Rode.
- 1.2 The planning application follows an earlier planning application (2021/2297/FUL) for a proposed development described as the “Erection of four dwellings and creation of new access” on a flat, vacant parcel of land to the rear of the Bell Inn, Frome Road, Rode “the application site”.
- 1.3 That particular application was validated 28 October 2021 and regrettably is going through the appeal process, as the Council have failed to determine the application.
- 1.4 Nevertheless, this application which now shows a revised scheme, is being submitted purely in the spirit of responding to the comments made by the Conservation and Planning Officers and to elicit a timely decision well within the statutory determination period. It is being made without prejudice to the appeal proposals which we believe should be granted consent in any event, the reasons for which are set out in the appeal statement. The application responds to the comments which were made by the officers during the previous planning application and addresses the issues which they raised. Therefore it is submitted in order to establish the principle of development and secure a timely consent within the statutory determination period.
- 1.5 This particular statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents and drawings:
  - Site Location Plan (7112\_00A)
  - Proposed Block Plan (7112\_11B)
  - Proposed Site Layout (7112\_12B)
  - Proposed Floor Plans (7112\_13A)
  - Proposed Elevations (7112\_14A)
  - 34293YOLS-01A Topographical Survey
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Windrush
  - Arboricultural Survey and Report by B J Unwin
  - Phase 1 Contaminated Land Report by Grangegeo
  - B01904 Highway Search by Landmark

## **2.0 Site and Surroundings**

- 2.1 The site comprises a flat parcel of land to the rear of the Bell Inn. The land is square in shape and is currently accessed via the public house car park. The site area associated with the proposed residential development measures approximately 0.3ha.
- 2.2 With the exception of the public house grounds to the south, the immediate area is residential in nature; a number of detached and semi-detached dwellings can be found along Church Lane. A looser development of properties can also be found along Frome Road.

### 3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The previous planning application sought full planning permission for the erection of four new dwellings on land to the rear of the Bell Inn. A copy of the layout is shown below in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Proposed Site Layout (7112\_03G) associated with Planning Application 2021/2297/FUL

3.2 This application as submitted, proposes three dwellings in short terrace, situated in the north east corner of the site. The design and layout of the proposed development has been led by the consultation and negotiation that took place during the course of the previous planning application for four dwellings. The Conservation Officer was unsatisfied with the previous scheme and recommended an alternative solution, one that is presented now and is shown below in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** The revised site layout showing three dwellings

- 3.3 The proposed access off Church Lane is as previously proposed, with its position along Church Lane remaining unchanged together with its width of 5m also being maintained. No objection was raised by the Highways Department to the creation of this access.
- 3.4 The 5m access serves a short driveway off which the parking are accessed. A visitor space is also accommodated near the site access. Four parking spaces can be found within a car barn within the curtilages of plot 2 and plot 3. In accordance with the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy, 9 parking spaces are proposed overall.
- 3.5 The dwellings are forward facing towards Church Lane and are two storeys in height. All three units have two bedrooms at first floor, with an open plan kitchen/dining area and separate living room at ground floor. Each property benefits from a large private rear garden.

#### **4.0 Planning Policy Considerations**

- 4.1 The latest housing supply situation for the Council was contained within the Statement on Five Year Housing Land Supply (dated January 2022). The document indicated that the Council could only demonstrate a 4.1 years supply of deliverable housing.
- 4.2 To the extent that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing supply of deliverable sites, the housing related policies in their Local Plan, including those defining settlement boundaries, cannot be regarded as up to date and the application has to be considered in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.
- 4.3 Consequently, and as confirmed during the course of the previous planning application, there should be no dispute over the principle of development, but rather what form it takes.
- 4.4 The site is not located within a conservation area but is located adjacent to the Conservation Area and Grade II listed public house.
- 4.5 Policy DP1: Local Identity and Distinctiveness requires proposals to contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness across the district and be formulated with an appreciation of the built and natural context of their locality recognising that distinctive street scenes, townscapes, views, scenery, boundary walls or hedges, trees, rights of way and other features collectively generate a distinct sense of place and local identity.
- 4.6 Policy DP7 also refers to the design and amenity of new development and Policy DP3, requires due consideration to be given to the impact on the Grade II listed public house and wider conservation area.
- 4.7 This area of Rode has an established linear pattern of development along Church Lane. The existing house stock along Church Lane has no particular design theme or style, but is characterised by dwellings sat towards the front of their plots.
- 4.8 With regard to the design and layout, the Conservation Officer and Planning Officer made several observations relating to the previously proposed development and made

recommendations for the scheme to become acceptable in their opinion. Various, different layouts were explored and discussed with the Council's Conservation and Planning Officers in order to reach agreement on design approach.

4.9 In summary, the keys points and questions raised were:

*...Concerned about the entire plot being developed and the impact this would have on the heritage assets (Pub and CA) together with the potential to undermine the vitality and viability of the public house*

*...There does not seem to be any reason in bringing forward an agricultural design in this location nor the site needing to be as large as it is. Possibly reducing the number of units and following the existing pattern of development together with allowing the pub to retain garden might be a way forward*

*There might be the possibility of continuing that pattern with single depth plots along the road possibly even 4 units as you originally proposed. This would leave much of the remaining land within the curtilage of the public house lessening the impact on the heritage assets*

*Have you considered a terrace of three cottages – like the three on the corner opposite the bus shelter – which would reduce the parking need and free-up more space?*

*Reduce the size of the units (2 and 3 beds) or reduce to 3 units which would assist in ensuring a more manageable parking layout.*

*Subject to reviewing a sketch scheme for such a proposal and the general house design being a more traditional cottage style, it is thought that the design and heritage concerns could be largely overcome*

*Currently The Bell is vacant and it is of some concern that the loss of its garden to development could render the business less attractive, thereby affecting the future of this heritage asset.*

*If sufficient garden was left for the pub, if, for example, at least half of the current space remained, such that it didn't feel like a narrow strip, then it would likely alleviate my concerns over the loss of garden...such a narrow pub garden would not, in my view be attractive for the pub as it wouldn't lend itself easily to some of the uses we discussed, such as having a marquee for weddings/parties, or creating a family-friendly area*

*I understand that parking is required...perhaps having 4no. 3-bed dwellings is too much for the site if they and their associated parking and gardens cannot be accommodated within a smaller site. The loss of more than half of this garden would be harmful to the significance of the heritage asset.*

4.10 In order to satisfy the above comments, the site layout has been completely reconfigured. The layout now shows a short terrace of 3no. 2 bedroom dwellings fronting Church Lane with parking to the front. A reduction in the number of units and bedroom numbers (which affect the level of parking provision) directly addresses the concerns over the number of units, and that 4no. 3 bedroom dwellings maybe too much for the site.

- 4.11 Given the reduced number of units, a larger portion of the site can be retained by the pub as the extent of “developed” land is much smaller and is focused towards the north east corner. The area excluded from the development (the retained garden area) amounts to approximately 70% of the overall site area, and is now of a shape and size, that could potentially enable the type of ancillary pub uses envisaged by the Council. This would alleviate any concern that the proposed development has the potential to undermine the vitality and viability of the public house.
- 4.12 Given the reconfiguration of the site, the siting and orientation of the proposed dwellings now follows the established and linear pattern of development along Church Lane, continuing the building line along Church Lane where dwellings are forward facing to the road.
- 4.13 As also suggested, changes to the external character and appearance of the dwellings have also been made. The design is no longer agricultural in nature, with cues now taken from the nearby development at Church Farm. The proposed houses are more traditional in appearance, meeting the Council’s call for a more typical and cottage type design approach. Using the favoured nearby Church Farm development as a guide, the houses would be two storey in height and of a similar style. We have also included a linked carport (see Figure 3 below) for the middle plot, a feature also found within the Church Farm development.



**Figure 3:** CGI image of house types at Church Farm

- 4.14 Council consultees, such as highways; ecology; archaeology and environmental protection, raised no objections subject to conditions to the previously proposed scheme submitted under planning application 2021/2297/FUL. As this proposal represents a residential development albeit with fewer units, we consider that other material planning considerations have been previously and adequately addressed. The changes to the scheme should not materially affect the council consultee feedback or responses to those previously provided.

## **5.0 Planning Balance & Conclusion**

- 5.1 This application is submitted in good faith following the Conservation and Planning Officers comments on a previous scheme showing four units at the same site (planning application 2021/2297/FUL).

- 5.2 The principle of residential development at this site was found to be acceptable in the previous planning application. The Council raised concerns at the design of the proposed development and alternative designs were discussed during the determination of the previous application.
- 5.3 The proposed development now comprises an alternative scheme taking into account the suggestions and recommendations of the Conservation and Planning Officers, in order to satisfactorily address their concerns about the previously proposed development.
- 5.4 The new scheme is now considered in line with the vision the Officers had for the application site with any impact on the significance of the heritage assets; the Grade II listed pub and nearby Conservation Area, considerably reduced.
- 5.5 All other material considerations were previously addressed and considered to be satisfied (subject to conditions) based on the feedback and consultation responses from the statutory consultees.
- 5.6 As a result, the development is accordance with Local Plan Policies, and a timely and positive decision within the statutory determination period, should be made.
- 5.7 To re-iterate the content of paragraph 1.4 of this statement, this application is being made without prejudice to the appeal process for the original scheme of four units (2021/2297/FUL).