

## **Design & Access Statement**

**Project** – Demolition of 1no. existing dwelling, construction of 3 no. new dwellings with new access and associated works at Whitecross Gardens, Seaton

**Date** – February 2024 rev1

## Introduction

This Design and Access statement concisely presents a proposal to develop the site to create x3 dwellings.

## EXISTING

### Location & Context

The site is accessed off Colyford Road with Whitecross Gardens wrapping around its South and East edges which provides access to the recent new build housing development. Whitecross Gardens is located north of Seaton Beach, approximately 15 minutes walk to town and a few minutes drive by car. Currently the site is fenced off with the existing property unoccupied and in poor condition.



Image: Google Earth Image – Site Location/Context

### Surrounding Developments:

Whitecross Gardens is the newer dense housing development which is accessed off Whitecross gardens and consists of 14 two storey dwellings with render, stone and concrete roof tiles for the finishes and there are stone walls to the boundary. Along Colyford Road and The Saltings are large detached dwellings with moderate sized plots with predominantly brick, render and concrete roof tile finishes.

### Site:

The site has an area of 1424m<sup>2</sup> and is generally level with a slight gradient falling south to north. The existing dilapidated dwelling was formerly a farm house and has prefabricated concrete walls which wouldn't achieve current building regulation requirements or be feasible to refurbish.

To the north of the site, facing Colyford Road, is a large 10m tall Oak tree. Although the Tree survey highlights that it is not essential to be retained, the existing tree provides substantial benefits and value to Colyford road, as well as privacy to the site, and therefore considered appropriate to retain. There are also three smaller trees to the front of the existing dwelling consisting of Ash and Walnut, all of which are considered unsuitable to retain and suitable to be removed refer to Tree Appraisal ref: DTS23.10812.1.TAP (1 of 1).



**Image:** View of site looking North along Colyford Road



**Image:** Existing access – site from Colyford Road



**Image:** View of existing dwelling from Whitecross Gardens



**Image:** View looking South, Colyford Road/Whitecross junction

## PLANNING HISTORY

A development enquiry ref: 22/0126/PREAPP was submitted on 15.09.2022 and feedback received from Planning Officer Andrew Digby email dated 19.10.2022. The initial development enquiry looked at retaining the existing dwelling and extending it to create x4 dwellings on the site. A summary of the main points are listed below:

- concerns over the impact on No's 1 & 4 The Saltings along the north east boundary, having two storey buildings too close to the boundary would be overbearing/ cast shadows to gardens and impact on outlook,
- principle of redeveloping the site is considered acceptable,
- external appearance of the buildings considered acceptable,
- trees should be retained and protected,
- boundary treatments should be of high quality,

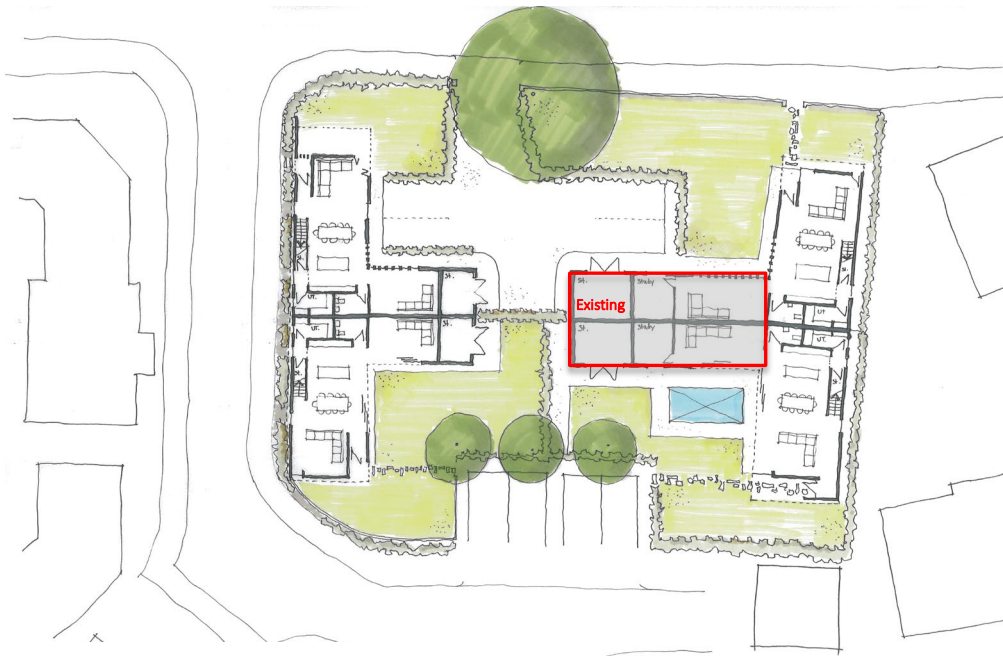


Image: Pre Application – Ground Floor Plan



Image: Pre Application – First Floor Plan



**Image:** Pre Application – Elevations

An amended scheme was submitted which proposed four detached dwellings wrapping around private garden spaces and the demolition of the existing dwelling. Further feedback was received email dated 07.02.2023 together with highways advice email dated 09.02.2023 and included the following:

- 1.5x1.5m visibility splays required for the new access created off Colyford Road/planting within splay to be maintained at a height of no more than 600mm,
- development along south west elevation should be set back 2.5m from footway/verge to match existing houses of Whitecross Gardens opposite in line with National Model Design Code for privacy and outlook,
- development along Colyford Road should be set back 1.3-1.8m to match 42-44 Colyford Road and the character of the wider area,
- advised to create units with active frontages addressing the street,
- elevations/materials to the public elevations need to be sensitive, light and welcoming, dark standing seam with narrow windows considered oppressive,
- obscured glazing required to first floor windows to north east elevation facing onto The Saltings.



Image: Pre Application – Amended Scheme, Ground Floor Plan



Image: Pre Application – Amended Scheme, First Floor Plan



Image: Pre Application – Amended Scheme, Elevations

Following this an enquiry was made on 11.07.2023 regarding the distance to the North East boundary and the development's relationship to No's 1 & 4 The Saltings. The following feedback was received, email dated 21.09.2023:

- the provision of a driveway/parking within the root protection area of the roadside oak tree is not likely to be supported
- new tree planting in the rear gardens should be considered with loss of other trees elsewhere,
- relationship with 4 units as shown increases potential loss of light to 1 & 4 The Salting's gardens and impact on outlook from gardens and windows.
- with four units there is a greater risk of overlooking due to the shallow depth of gardens,
- three units of this size considered more suitable for the site.

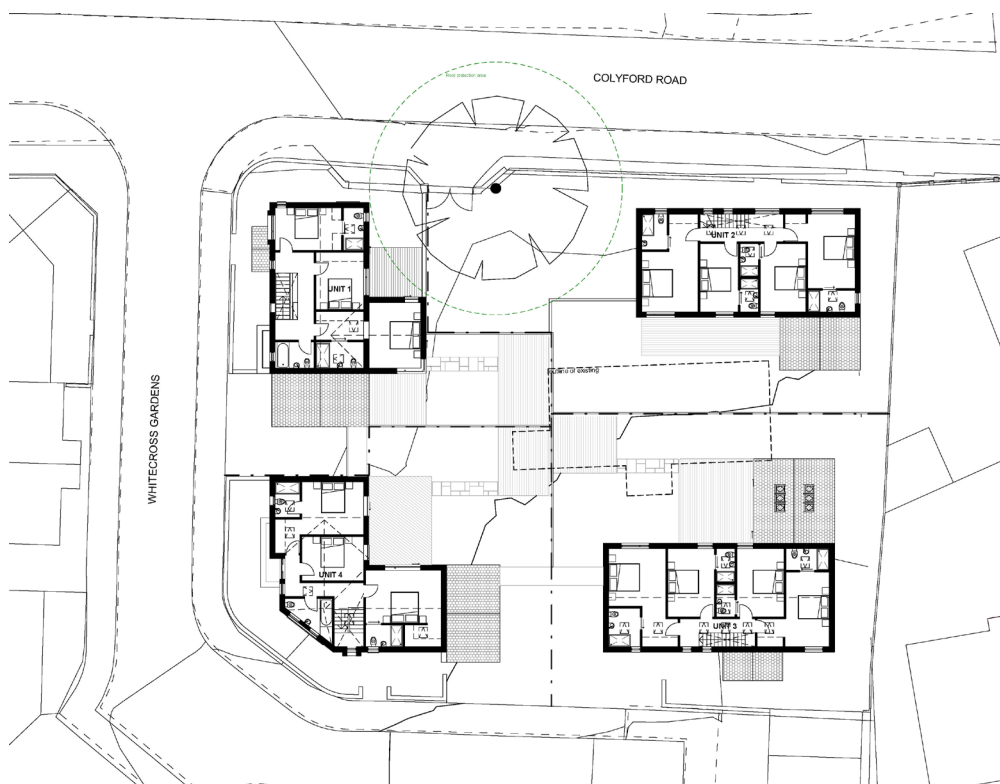


Image: Pre Application – Revised Scheme, First Floor Plan/Proximity to No's 1&4 The Saltings query

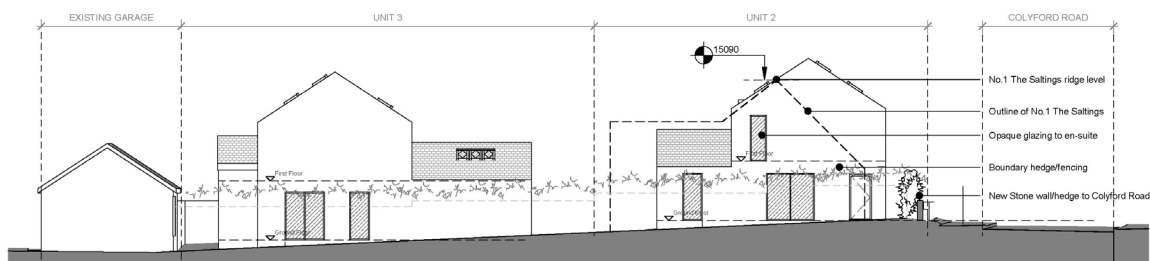


Image: Pre Application – Revised Scheme, North East Elevation

## PROPOSALS

### Concept

The concept for the development is to provide contemporary dwellings that responds to 21st century design trends without resorting to historic pastiche. In doing so, we aim to create internal spaces that encourage open plan living and engage with the immediate garden spaces and context.

Following the feedback received in the pre-application process and due to the extremely poor condition of the existing dwelling which is not considered suitable for renovation/extension, the proposals have been developed to demolish the existing dwelling and now create three new four bed dwellings.



### Detailed Proposals

The units (numbered 1-3 clockwise from top left facing Colyford Road) are orientated around central private gardens maximising on the path of the sun and to provide privacy to the gardens. All the units are set back from the footway/verge with high quality boundary treatments providing front amenity spaces and outlook/privacy, reflecting the character of the area and in line with National Model Design Code. With the reduction from four to now three units, this provides generous gardens with increased distances between dwellings and minimal overlooking. In plan each dwelling has an 'L' shape arrangement wrapping around its amenity space. All dwellings benefit from open plan living accommodation at ground floor looking out to their gardens and bedrooms are located at first floor. Along Whitecross Gardens the proposal is stepped back from the road with planting in front mirroring the new build development opposite, creating an edge to the street as well as acting as a separation between public and private spaces. All dwellings will have active/inviting frontages as per the houses in Whitecross Gardens and Colyford Road.



## Materials

Proposed external materials will be sensitive and appropriate for the context of the surrounding properties consisting of stone, render and slates in keeping with the new build development, with some timber cladding as a welcomed break to the elevations and being a natural and traditional material, appropriate for its context. All dwellings have pitched roofs as per those in the vicinity with slate finish and eaves heights to match the existing houses of Whitecross Gardens. High quality stone boundary walls and hedging will provide privacy to the amenity spaces alongside Colyford Road and similarly hedges and new trees will provide privacy to the south facing amenity spaces along Whitecross Gardens.

## Trees

Following the tree appraisal Ref: 'DTS23.10812.1.TAP (1 of 1)' it is planned to retain the existing tree along Colyford Road and remove all other trees which are considered unretainable or suitable to be removed but with the addition of new planting/hedges and trees to minimize impact on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible.

## Ecology/Biodiversity

Following the Preliminary Ecological Assessment and emergence surveys the existing dwelling is used by common pipistrelle bats and soprano pipistrelle bats and therefore a bat license will be required to legally allow the demolition works to proceed following planning approval. Following the Ecologist's recommendations, Ecology report Ref: '230425 Whitecross Gardens PEA BAPS BES Rev00, to ensure the development results in a positive biodiversity impact the following is provided and would be welcomed as a condition of approval:

- new boundary hedging with native planting is proposed to the North East boundary providing an additional habitat/biodiversity net gains as well as privacy to both the proposed units and No's 1 & 4 The Saltings.
- a habitat pile is also provided in line with the Ecologist's recommendations refer to FG13 – Proposed Site Plan,
- Bird and Bat boxes and Bee bricks will be provided to each new dwelling,
- other areas of new planting and trees have been indicated and these can be of local provenance in line with the Ecologist's recommendations.

The grassland continues to be managed with a short grassland sward as per the recommendations of the Ecology report to discourage any establishment of amphibians or reptiles within the development area. Any required external sensitive lighting plan so to not disturb the nocturnal behaviour of bats would be welcomed as a condition of approval.

## Access

New access is provided from Colyford Road to unit 2 with space for maneuvering of vehicles off road allowing forward entry and exit. Clear 1.5x1.5m visibility splays in line with DCC highways requirements has been provided, planting within the splay will be maintained at a height of no more than 600mm. The new drive between unit 2 and the north east boundary helps further increase the distance between unit 2 and No. 1 The Saltings in terms of outlook and privacy. Windows to the upper storey of unit 2 will have opaque glazing to mitigate any overlooking/loss of privacy concerns. Access to Units 1 and 3 are off Whitecross Gardens. All properties will have parking for 2no. cars. A detached garage block serves units 2 & 3 with ridge height to match the existing garage adjacent.

## Sustainable design and renewables

The new dwellings will have far improved energy efficiency from that of the existing property and will use sustainable principles with Passivhaus standard as a baseline, to reduce its carbon footprint with the main focus on improving its energy efficiency and reducing the running costs over the life span of the house. Modern construction methods allow the reduction of heat loss from the building fabric and strategically

placed openable windows will enhance natural cross ventilation for summer cooling. Provision for inset solar panels to the roofs have been indicated together with the incorporation of air source heat pumps. In addition, car charging points will be provided. All dwellings will have storage for bicycles and bins within the garages.

### **Drainage**

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and not within a critical drainage area and therefore at low risk of flooding. As there is insufficient space for either a shared soakaway or single soakaway for each unit, surface water from the roofs will be discharged at a controlled rate to the combined sewer via a new attenuation tank. There is also the potential for rainwater harvesting. Externally, permeable surfaces are proposed to all outside areas outside of the building footprints.

### **SUMMARY**

Constructed with materials and forms appropriate for its context and incorporating a modern sense of space, light and detail; these proposals represent the opportunity to develop an unoccupied piece of land to form 3 new dwellings of appropriate size and scale for their setting whilst contributing towards new homes targets for the area.