

Plans for 72 Dorset homes approved as council's refusal overturned

A developer has been given the green light to build 72 homes in north Dorset after the local council's rejection of the plans was overturned following a public inquiry.

Last year Dorset Council refused Cicero Estates' outline planning application for the 13-acre (5.2 hectare) site on the edge of Marnhull, on the grounds the scheme could harm the village's historic and natural setting.

Heritage assets in Marnhull, which has a population of around 2,000 people, include the grade-I listed St Gregory's Church and several grade-II listed homes.

Bournemouth-based Ken Parke Planning Consultants (KPPC), which acted for Cicero Estates during the appeal, said a planning inspector had decided the development north of Crown Road could "make a significant contribution" to housing supply in the area.

Adam Bennett, chartered town planning consultant at KPPC, said inspector Paul Jackson had concluded Dorset Council could not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply in the north of the county – enough specific sites to provide five years' worth of housing to hit Government delivery targets

Mr Bennett said the inspector's report had also found that while the development would be visible from historic buildings in the village, this "would not erode their significance".

He added: "When balanced in the frame of the council's absence of a five-year housing land supply, its policies for the supply of housing being rendered out of date, and the

significant need for both market and affordable homes, the benefits in this case both significantly and demonstrably outweighed any harm when considered within the NPPF's tilted balance.

"We are grateful for the inspector's decision which will help provide much-needed homes, including affordable housing, and accompanying community benefits."

A total of 28 homes in the proposed development are set to be classified as affordable. Contributions could also be made towards existing facilities in Marnhull, such as the village hall, allotments, outdoor sports and facilities, a play area, footpath upgrades, the GP surgery and secondary education.

A reserved matters application for details of the development is expected to be decided within the coming year.

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