# **Application Report**

Planning, Housing and Health North Devon Council Lynton House, Commercial Road, Barnstaple, EX31 1DG



Application No: 78873

Application Type:Full ApplicationApplication Expiry:15 November 2024Extension of Time Expiry:15 November 2024Publicity Expiry:17 September 2024

Parish/Ward: COMBE MARTIN/COMBE MARTIN

**Location:** Manleighs

Manleigh Lodge

Kiln Lane Combe Martin Ilfracombe Devon EX34 0LY

**Proposal:** Change of use of vacant garage to residential dwelling with

parking and landscaping

Agent: Mrs Emily Warner
Applicant: Mr and Mrs Lethaby

Planning Case Officer: Mr K. Webster

Departure:

**EIA Development:** 

**EIA Conclusion:** NO EIA REQUIRED

**Decision Level/Reason for** Committee – The applicant is a Councillor

Report to Committee (If

Applicable):

## **Site Description**

Manleigh Lodge is a building near Manleighs that is authorised to be used as a garage and store, but now appears redundant/disused. It is sited outside, but near the development boundary of Combe Martin. The village is accessed via Kiln Lane to the north, a narrow lane that has an unconventional and narrow slip-road style access to the A399, the main road through the village.

The building was converted into a dwelling without Planning Permission and was subject to an Enforcement Notice (10878) which required for domestic paraphernalia to be removed from the building such that it would be returned to its use as a garage/store. It can be confirmed that has been complied with, and planning application 74818 has regularised the retaining walls and engineering works around the building (see ENQ/0732/2023). Though, it doesn't sit well in the landscape.

Planning Application 76322 was 'Declined to Determine' as the situation had not changed since the Enforcement Notice was served, and the building was still used as a dwelling. The building is now claimed to be redundant. The owners can't find a use for it as their tenants at Manleighs don't need the space and it is unlikely that any commercial would be

suitable at this location. The land surrounding the building is being used to store many vehicles (caravans/motorhomes, cars and a bus).

The site has parking areas, space that can be defined as curtilage and the building is structurally sound and capable of 'conversion' without external alterations (the rooms are already set out internally).

The site is outside the development boundary for Combe Martin but within walking distance of a shop, a pub and bus routes in the village. The site is within the National Landscape (AONB).



Front (North) Elevation



Retaining Wall and Raised Garden



Side (East) Elevation



Nearby Manleigh House

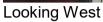


Proposed Front Curtilage Area



**Looking North** 







View of Site from North

## Recommendation

## Refused

Legal Agreement Required: No

## **Planning History**

Reference Number	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date
32048	CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL HOME TO FORM PRIVATE DWELLING at MANLEY, KILN LANE, COMBE MARTIN, ILFRACOMBE, EX34 0LY	FULL PLANNING APPROVAL	25 February 2002
38692	RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR FORMATION OF DOMESTIC POND at MANLEIGH, KILN LANE, COMBE MARTIN, ILFRACOMBE, EX34 0LY	FULL PLANNING APPROVAL	18 November 2004
40120	ERECTION OF GARAGE / WORKSHOP / STORE WITH RECREATION AREA OVER (AMENDED PLANS) at MANLEIGH, KILN LANE, COMBE MARTIN, DEVON, EX340LY	FULL PLANNING APPROVAL	6 July 2005
74818	Retrospective renewal of a retaining wall at Manleigh, Kiln Lane, Combe Martin, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 0LY	Approved	27 June 2022
76322	Regularising the use of an existing residential dwelling at Manleigh Lodge Kiln Lane, Combe Martin, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 0LY	Declined to determine	11 January 2023

## **Constraints/Planning Policy**

Constraint / Local Plan Policy	Distance (Metres)
Advert Control Area: Area of Special Advert Control	Within constraint

Constraint / Local Plan Policy	Distance (Metres)
Chivenor Safeguard Zone Consultation Structure or works exceeding 91.4m	Within constraint
Landscape Character is: 4C Coastal slopes and combes with settlement	Within constraint
USRN: 27500545 Road Class: R Ownership: Highway Authority/Private	1.79
Within: 100m of Adopted Heritage Coast	Within constraint
Within: Adopted AONB (ST09 & ST14)	Within constraint
Within: Adopted Coast and Estuary Zone	Within constraint
Within: Adopted Unesco Biosphere Transition (ST14)	Within constraint
Within: Flood Zone 2	Within constraint
Within: Flood Zone 3	Within constraint
Within: SSSI 5KM Buffer in North Devon (Exmoor NP), consider need for AQIA if proposal is for anaerobic digester without combustion plant	Within constraint
Within: SSSI 5KM Buffer in North Devon, consider need for AQIA if proposal is for anaerobic digester without combustion plant	Within constraint
Within: Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods, SAC 10KM Buffer if agricultural development consider need for AQIA	Within constraint
Within: Exmoor Heaths, SAC 10KM Buffer if agricultural development consider need for AQIA	Within constraint

SSSI Impact Risk Consultation Area	Within constraint
DM01 - Amenity Considerations	
DM04 - Design Principles	
DM05 - Highways	
DM06 - Parking Provision	
DM08 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity	
DM08A - Landscape and Seascape Character	
DM27 - Re-use of Rural Buildings	
ST04 - Improving the Quality of Development	
ST07 - Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Devon's	
Rural Area	
ST09 - Coast and Estuary Strategy	
ST14 - Enhancing Environmental Assets	
ST17 - A Balanced Local Housing Market	

## Consultees

Name	Comment
DCC -	The following objections are raised:
Development	
Management	1) The proposed development is likely to result in an increase in
Highways	the volume of traffic entering and leaving the Class I County
	Road, the A399, through junctions that do not provide adequate
Reply Received	visibility from and of emerging vehicles, with consequent risk of
26 September	additional danger to all users of that road and interference with
2024	the free flow of traffic, contrary to Policy DM05 (1) of the joint

Name	Comment		
	North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (2018) and		
	Paragraphs 114 (b) and 115 of the National Planning Policy		
	Framework (December 2023).		
	2) The horizontal alignment, and gradient, of the junctions onto		
	the A399, are likely to result in excessive manoeuvring on the		
	highway, with consequent risk of additional danger to all users of		
	the road, contrary to Policy DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and		
	Torridge Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (2018) and Paragraphs 114 (b)		
	and 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December		
	l ,		
	2023).		
	3) The road providing access to the site is, by reason of its		
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,		
	inadequate width, horizontal alignment, gradient, junctions and		
	lack of footway provision, unsuitable to accommodate the		
	increase in traffic likely to be generated, contrary to Policy DM05		
	(1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031		
	and Paragraphs 114 (b), 115 and 116 (c) of the National Planning		
	Policy Framework (December 2023).		
Environmental	I have reviewed this application in relation to Environmental		
Health Manager	Protection matters and comment as follows:		
Reply Received	1 Land Contamination		
28 August 2024			
	I do not expect land contamination issues to arise in relation to		
	the proposals. However, given the sensitivity of residential		
	developments, I recommend the following condition be included		
	on any permission to cover the possibility that unexpected		
	contamination is discovered during development work:		
	- Contaminated Land (Unexpected Contamination) Condition		
	Should any suspected contamination of ground or groundwater		
	be encountered during development of the site, the Local		
	Planning Authority shall be contacted immediately. Site activities		
	within that sub-phase or part thereof shall be temporarily		
	suspended until such time as a procedure for addressing the		
	contamination is agreed upon with the Local Planning Authority or		
	,		
	other regulating bodies.		
	Peason: To ensure that any contamination exposed during		
	Reason: To ensure that any contamination exposed during		
	development works is assessed and remediated in accordance		
North Davis	with National Planning Policy Framework guidance.		
North Devon	No comments received.		
Coast National			
Landscape			
Sustainability	No comment		
Officer			
Reply Received			
6 September			
2024			

Name	Comment
Combe Martin Parish Council	Combe Martin Parish Council supports this application
Reply Received 18 September 2024	
Councillor B Lethaby	No comments received.

## **Neighbours / Interested Parties**

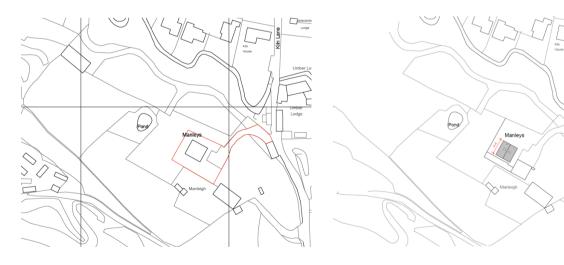
Comments	No Objection	Object	Petition	No. Signatures
0.0	8	1	0.0	0.0

Representation has been received setting out support for the Change of Use due to the enhanced appearance (from derelict to dwelling), economic/social benefits, helping meet housing needs, planting provision and its sustainable location. There was one objection due to highways traffic.

## **Proposal Description**

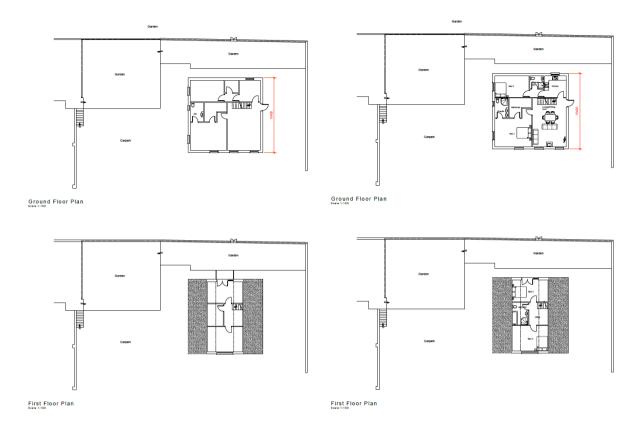
This application seeks full planning permission for the Change of Use of a redundant and disused building into a residential unit.

The proposed Change of Use from garage/store (as authorised) to a residential dwelling would not require any external alterations that would be significant in terms of the appearance of the dwelling and the impact on the landscape. The Change of Use would require a curtilage area to be set out, where planting is proposed around the site to provide visual and biodiversity enhancements.



Location Plan

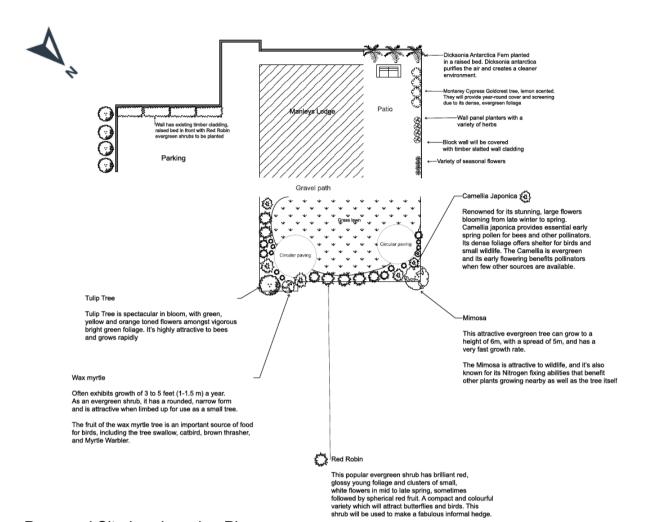
**Existing Site Plan** 



## **Existing Floor Plans**

# Proposed Floor Plans





## Proposed Site Landscaping Plan





Perspective of Proposed Curtilage and Landscaping/Planting

## **Planning Considerations Summary**

- Principle of Development
- Design Principles
- Amenity Considerations
- Impact on Ecology
- Highways and Parking

## **Planning Considerations**

In the determination of a planning application Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is relevant. It states that for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination is to be made

in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area includes the Devon Waste Plan and North Devon and Torridge Local Plan. The relevant Policies are detailed above.

On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales became "National Landscapes". The site the subject of this application therefore now falls within the North Devon Coast National Landscape (NDCNL). However, the legal designation and policy status of AONBs is unchanged. Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('National Landscape') in England, to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area by way of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. The duty applies to local planning authorities and other decision makers in making planning decisions on development and infrastructure proposals, as well as to other public bodies and statutory undertakers.

The Planning Practice Guidance refers to the relevance of management plans for AONBs for assessing planning applications. Whilst these do not form part of the development plan, they help to set out the strategic context for development and provide evidence of the value and special qualities of these areas. The North Devon Coast AONB Management Plan is therefore a material consideration, as its objectives align with those in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

## **Principle of Development**

Policy DM27 (Re-use of Disused and Redundant Rural Buildings) states that the conversion of redundant and disused rural buildings will be supported where:

- (a) such conversion would not harm any intrinsic qualities and historic interest of the building:
- (b) the proposal will have a positive impact on the immediate setting of the building and the wider rural character is protected;
- (c) development can be achieved without significant external alteration, extension or substantive rebuilding:
- (d) suitable highway access can be provided, and the surrounding highway network can support the proposed use(s); and
- (e) any nature conservation interest within the building or wider site is retained.

Policy ST07 (Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Devon's Rural Area) of the Local Plan supports development in the countryside which meets a local social and economic need, reuses rural buildings and requires a countryside location.

Policy ST17 (A Balanced Local Housing Market) of the Local Plan requires for development proposals to reflect identified housing needs in terms of the scale and mix of dwellings, the number of dwellings, the character/context of the site and accessibility to local facilities/amenities.

This Change of Use seeks to reuse a redundant building to provide a four-bedroom dwelling. Despite the site being just outside the development boundary of Combe Martin, in policy terms, the site is considered to be in the open countryside. Policy ST07(4)

supports development in the countryside which meets local social and economic needs and reuses rural buildings.

The proposal would reuse a rural building, in line with policy ST07(4) and it is considered, in this case, that there would be an indirect/marginal economic and social benefit resulting from the Change of Use.

The site lies within 50 metres of the development boundary of Combe Martin and is within walking distance of public transport links (bus stops) and various amenities and facilities within the village, such as shops, public houses, the village hall, a church and public open space.

At the time of writing, the existing building is not in use. On site, the fixtures and fittings have been removed in compliance with the upheld enforcement notice, and the building does not appear to be used for storage or for any other use. The Planning Statement details that the applicant explored potential uses for the building, including for it to be used as a shared storage space for the tenants of the nearby flats, however there was no interest. As such, it is considered that the building is indeed redundant and disused, therefore policy DM27 applies here.

Policy DM27 requires for accordance with all points from (a) to (e). It is considered that the proposed Change of Use accords with (a), (b), (c) and (e) as it would be a conversion that would not require external alteration that would negatively affect the character of the building, and, with the proposed planting, a positive impact would be made on the appearance and character of the setting and biodiversity/ecology.

With regards to point (d), however, Devon County Council's Highways Authority have objected to the proposal as they consider the highway network, specifically the intersection of Kiln Lane and the A399, to be insufficient to accommodate an additional residential unit at this location. The junction here has an unusual alignment and gradient and is considered to have insufficient visibility and space to safely accommodate the anticipated increase in traffic.

Whilst conversion may be acceptable in principle there is concern that due to the conflict with point (d), the proposed Change of Use therefore does not comply with DM27 and cannot be considered acceptable in principle, due to the weight of importance of highways safety. Matters regarding highways will be discussed further later in the report.

#### **Design Principles**

Policy ST04 (Improving the Quality of Development) of the Local Plan states that development will achieve high quality inclusive and sustainable design to support the creation of successful, vibrant places. Design will be based on a clear process that analyses and responds to the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area taking full account of the principles of design found in policy DM04.

Policy DM04 (Design Principles) of the Local Plan requires development to be appropriate and sympathetic to setting in terms of scale, density, massing, height, layout appearance, fenestration, materials and relationship to buildings and landscape features in the local neighbourhood.

Policy DM08A (Landscape and Seascape Character) emphasises that great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty and character of the designated landscapes and seascapes within the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Policy ST09 (Coast and Estuary Strategy) is a consideration as the site is located within the Coast and Estuary Zone and as such, any development in this area will need to ensure that it does not detract from the character, appearance and heritage of the area, while maintaining and enhancing the sustainability of the community.

The internal layout remains similar to when the building was being used as an unauthorised residential dwelling. The fixtures and fittings have been removed since the enforcement notice was upheld (since May 2023). As such, the Change of Use would not result in any significant internal alterations, only the installation of the required fixtures and fittings.

Furthermore, the proposed Change of Use would not require any substantive alteration that would affect the external appearance of the building aside from the boards covering the windows being removed. The proposed curtilage area would be enhanced in terms of its appearance through the provision of planting in front (to the north of) the dwelling. Also, on request, planting is proposed around the base of the existing retaining walls has been added to the proposed to help assimilate/soften the impact of the existing retaining walls on the landscape.

The Change of Use would therefore result in an enhancement to the designated National Landscape (AONB) and would be acceptable in terms of design, in accordance with policies DM27, ST04, DM04, DM08A and ST09 of the Local Plan and The Duty above.

#### **Amenity Considerations**

Policy DM01 (Amenity Considerations) of the Local Plan states development will be supported where it would not significantly harm the amenities of any neighbouring occupiers or uses; and the intended occupants of the proposed development would not be harmed as a result of existing or allocated uses.

The site is close to the development boundary of Combe Martin and the nearby residential units (flats) within Manleigh House. However, due to the proposed use and the orientation and siting of the building, the proposed Change of Use would have negligible impact on nearby occupants.

The closest residential units would be the apartments within Manleigh House approximately 20 metres away. There are no concerns raised with regards to loss of privacy, overbearing or any other amenity consideration.

The Council's Environmental Health had no concerns with regards to neighbouring amenity.

The development is not considered to result in significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents and any future occupants of the proposed dwelling. As such, the proposal is, subject to condition (to address potential contamination), in compliance with policy DM01 and DM02.

## **Impact on Ecology**

Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that the impact of development on wildlife is fully considered during the determination of a planning application under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (Habitat Regulations 2019).

Policy ST14 (Enhancing Environmental Assets) of the Local Plan aims to protect and enhance northern Devon's natural environment by ensuring that development contributes to providing a net gain in biodiversity where possible.

Policy DM08 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the Local Plan requires development should conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests and soils commensurate with their status and giving appropriate weight to their importance.

This application is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements (BNG metric), however would still require the provision of a 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with Local Plan Policy.

The proposed Change of Use would not result in any significant external alterations that would affect wildlife or vegetation. As such, there would be no harm to ecology as a result of the Change of Use. The plans show planting would be provided around the proposed curtilage area, and this is considered sufficient to provide a biodiversity net gain.

The Council's Sustainability Officer was consulted and raised no objections to the development.

Given the information received, provided conditions are adhered to, the proposal would be considered acceptable with regard to the ecological impact, in compliance with policies ST14 and DM08 along with relevant policies of the NPPF.

#### **Highways and Parking**

Policy DM05 (Highways) of the Local Plan states all development must ensure safe and well-designed vehicular access and egress, adequate parking and layouts which consider the needs and accessibility of all highway users.

Policy DM06 (Parking Provision) of the Local Plan requires development proposals to provide an appropriate scale and range of parking provision to meet anticipated needs.

With regards to access and parking, the arrangement would remain unchanged from the existing. The site can be access via a gated entrance to the northeast of the building from Kiln Lane. A short driveway allows access to a parking area immediately east of the dwelling, which are currently in use for the storage of a range of vehicles. This parking area can accommodate at least six vehicles.

Kiln Lane is a narrow residential lane that is single track and without any pavements/walkways. It has an unusual junction arrangement with the main road through Combe Martin (the A399). The A399 is elevated above Kiln Lane, which splits into two,

forming steep and narrow slip ways that are awkward in terms of space, visibility, gradient and alignment.

Secondly, highways safety had been a concern in previous Planning Applications and enforcement cases, and in some subsequent appeal decisions for these. For example, in Planning Application 58748, for the erection of a dwelling next to this site, the inspector dismissed an appeal against the refused Planning Permission due to, amongst other matters, how additional traffic would harm traffic flow and safety of road users.

As such, Devon County Council's Highways Authority were consulted, and they left the following comment:

The following objections are raised:

- 1) The proposed development is likely to result in an increase in the volume of traffic entering and leaving the Class I County Road, the A399, through junctions that do not provide adequate visibility from and of emerging vehicles, with consequent risk of additional danger to all users of that road and interference with the free flow of traffic, contrary to Policy DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 2031 (2018) and Paragraphs 114 (b) and 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).
- 2) The horizontal alignment, and gradient, of the junctions onto the A399, are likely to result in excessive manoeuvring on the highway, with consequent risk of additional danger to all users of the road, contrary to Policy DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 2031 (2018) and Paragraphs 114 (b) and 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).
- 3) The road providing access to the site is, by reason of its inadequate width, horizontal alignment, gradient, junctions and lack of footway provision, unsuitable to accommodate the increase in traffic likely to be generated, contrary to Policy DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 and Paragraphs 114 (b), 115 and 116 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

It is noted that there have not been any recorded incidents at the junction in the last 10 years. However, due to the increased volume of traffic along Kiln Lane as a result of the Change of Use, with the inadequate visibility, the lack of space and the limitations resulting from the alignment and gradient at the junction, the proposal to add a residential unit is considered unacceptable with regards to highways safety and contrary to policies DM27(d) and DM05 of the Local Plan in this case and the NPPF.

## **Conclusion**

The application is considered unacceptable in principle due to the anticipated increase in traffic as a result of adding a residential unit here, and the inadequacies of the junction between Kiln Lane and the A399. Refusal of the application is therefore recommended, as the proposed Change of Use is contrary to policies DM27(d) and DM05 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF in this regard.

#### **Human Rights Act 1998**

The provisions of the Human Rights Act and principles contained in the Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report. The articles/protocols identified below were considered of particular relevance:

- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private and Family Life
- THE FIRST PROTOCOL Article 1: Protection of Property

Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (the Public Sector Equality Duty or 'PSED'). There are no equality implications anticipated as a result of this decision.

## **Recommendation**

#### Refused

Legal Agreement Required: No

## Reason(s) For Refusal

- 1. The proposed development is likely to result in an increase in the volume of traffic entering and leaving the Class I County Road, the A399, through junctions that do not provide adequate visibility from and of emerging vehicles, with consequent risk of additional danger to all users of that road and interference with the free flow of traffic, contrary to Policy DM27 and DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 2031 (2018) and Paragraphs 114 (b) and 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).
- 2. The horizontal alignment, and gradient, of the junctions onto the A399, are likely to result in excessive manoeuvring on the highway, with consequent risk of additional danger to all users of the road, contrary to Policy DM27 and DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 2031 (2018) and Paragraphs 114 (b) and 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).
- 3. The road providing access to the site is, by reason of its inadequate width, horizontal alignment, gradient, junctions and lack of footway provision, unsuitable to accommodate the increase in traffic likely to be generated, contrary to Policy DM27 and DM05 (1) of the joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 and Paragraphs 114 (b), 115 and 116 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

#### **Informatives**

 The following plans were considered during the determination of this application:-400 100B Location and Block Plan and received on the 25/07/24, 404 103A Floors Proposed and received on the 08/07/24, 404 104A Elevations Proposed and received on the 08/07/24, NDC001A Landscape Plan and received on the 18/09/24,

# 2. INFORMATIVE NOTE: POLICIES AND PROPOSALS RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

Development Plan

North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2018: -

DM01 - Amenity Considerations

DM04 - Design Principles

DM05 - Highways

DM06 - Parking Provision

DM08 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

DM08A - Landscape and Seascape Character

DM27 - Re-use of Rural Buildings

ST04 - Improving the Quality of Development

ST07 - Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Devon's Rural Area

ST09 - Coast and Estuary Strategy

ST14 - Enhancing Environmental Assets

ST17 - A Balanced Local Housing Market

- 3. The submitted drawings have been numbered as set out above. Please refer to the planning application tracker on the District Council's website to view the drawings and their allocated numbers, http://planning.northdevon.gov.uk/search.asp
- 4. Statement of Engagement

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council works in a positive and pro-active way with Applicants and looks for solutions to enable the grant of planning permission. However, in this case the proposal is not sustainable development for the reasons set out and the Council was unable to identify a way of securing a development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.