

Application Number: 23/10819 Full Planning Permission
Site: SUNDOWN FARM, DROVE END, MARTIN SP6 3JT
Development: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new dwelling with detached garage/store, fencing, ground mounted PV cells and ground source heat pump with associated landscaping and ecological pond located north west of the existing dwelling and fronting Howgare Road

Applicant: Ms C Besent
Agent: BoonBrown Architects Ltd
Target Date: 31/10/2023
Case Officer: Vivienne Baxter
Officer Recommendation: Refuse
Reason for Referral to Committee:

1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

- 1) Principle of the development
- 2) Design, size and site layout
- 3) Landscape impact on the character and appearance of the Natural Landscape (AONB)
- 4) Impact on the residential amenities of future occupiers
- 5) Ecology and habitat mitigation.
- 6) Highway matters including parking.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies within the countryside and Cranborne Chase Natural Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and is located to the northwest corner of the A354 with Howgare Road. The site is formed from the existing dwelling and associated curtilage, farm track and area where the proposed dwelling would be located.

The existing dwelling is located less than 10m away from the main road but is well screened by trees and other vegetation so it cannot be readily seen. The existing dwelling and adjacent barn are both accessed off Howgare Road, close to its junction with the main road.

The boundary to Howgare Road is a typical field boundary which runs parallel to the site where there are a pair of metal farm gates set some 150 m back from the main road where the land rises up to the north. The boundaries of the site away from the roads are not presently marked, being an open field.

There is an existing mobile home on land to the rear of the barn and which it is understood the applicant is presently living in pending the outcome of the current planning application.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is to erect a replacement dwelling on a different siting further west and fronting onto Howgare Road. The proposed new property would comprise hall, sitting room, boot room, plant, WC, farm office and large kitchen/dining area at ground floor level with 4 bedrooms (2 ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor level. The indicative residential curtilage would also include a detached garage building with secure cycle parking, car port and implement store with tackroom/store above accessed via an external staircase. An ecological pond is also proposed to be provided to the new property's frontage.

The existing dwelling - which comprises sitting room, living room, kitchen with pantry, office and WC accessed externally at ground floor level with four bedrooms, box room and a bathroom at first floor level - and associated garage structure (which has collapsed) - would be demolished and land left to minimise disruption to wildlife.

To the west of the indicative residential curtilage there would be two rows of solar photovoltaic panels with ground source heat pump loops extending some 32m x 16m around the solar arrays (albeit underground). To the southeast of the proposed curtilage would be a drainage field associated with the proposed sewage treatment plant.

The existing farm access onto Howgare Road would be retained for use as a farm track with the residential access provided off this track and separated by a gate and cattle grid. The existing access point close to the barn and existing dwelling would be removed and grassed over.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal	Decision Date	Decision Description	Status
XX/RFR/00539 Farm buildings.	08/12/1949	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided
XX/RFR/00478 Farmhouse.	08/12/1949	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided

5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy

Policy CCC2: Safe and sustainable travel

Policy ENV1: Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites.

Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness

Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality

Policy IMPL2: Development standards

Policy STR2: Protection of the countryside, Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the adjoining New Forest National Park

Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014

DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity

DM20: Residential development in the countryside

DM21: Agricultural or forestry workers dwellings

Supplementary Planning Guidance And Documents

SPD - Air Quality in New Development. Adopted June 2022
SPD - Design of Waste Management Facilities in New Development
SPG - Landscape Character Assessment
SPD - Parking Standards
SPG - Residential Design Guide for Rural Areas
SPD - Mitigation Strategy for European Sites

Neighbourhood Plan

N/A

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

National Planning Policy Guidance

6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Martin Parish Council

On Monday 16 October 2023, the Martin Parish Council met to discuss application 23/10819. The council resolved to recommend PAR 3 Permission. Regarding the old home on site, it was felt that it made sense to demolish the building rather than renovate or maintain it as is. It is currently an eyesore. In regard to the new proposed building, it was felt that the house site is hidden in a dip in the land and would not detract from the beauty of the downs. The design of the building is in keeping with the area and will fit into the landscape.

7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

No comments received.

8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Comments have been received from the following consultees:

Ecologist: Request further details and recommend condition

NFDC Landscape Team: Comment only but raise concern with the extent of ancillary residential infrastructure in the countryside, inappropriate landscape mitigation and that preference should be given to refurbishing the existing dwelling.

Environmental Health (Pollution): No objection subject to condition

AONB/NL Office: Comment only but raise concerns about the isolated siting of the new dwelling and its impact on the landscape, the extent of full height glazing and roof lights and conflict with the AONB Management Plan

9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None

10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

In principle, under Policy DM20 of Local Plan Part 2 new dwellings are not usually permitted within the countryside unless, amongst other criteria, they are for agricultural purposes or replacements of existing dwellings. The replacement dwelling should not normally provide for an increase in floor space of more than 30%.

Both of these exception criteria of Policy DM20 apply to the current proposal, however, to be acceptable the proposed dwelling also needs to be of an appropriate design, scale and appearance in keeping with the rural character of the area and should not significantly alter the impact of built development on the site within its setting.

Policy DM21 of Local Plan Part 2 is also relevant to this application as it specifically relates to agricultural workers dwellings. The policy requirements are as follows:

- (i) there is a clearly established existing functional need.*
- (ii) the need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the agriculture/forestry enterprise and does not relate to a part-time requirement.*
- (iii) the unit and the agricultural/forestry activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so;*
- (iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned.*

With this in mind, it has been stated in the submitted documents that the applicant is currently working the land associated with the farmhouse having purchased it from the previous farmer and as such, there is an established functional need. It is the applicant's only employment, and she is assisted by family members. Although it is not clear how long the farm has been established, it should be noted that the existing farmhouse was built in the late 1940s and was occupied until late 2022. This policy also requires new buildings to be well related to existing buildings or other dwellings.

As such, the principle of a replacement dwelling is acceptable in accordance with policy but this is subject to the proposed dwelling being of an appropriate design, scale and appearance in keeping with the rural character of the area and should not significantly alter the impact of built development on the site within its setting and well related to existing buildings or other dwellings.

These matters are considered further below.

Design, size and site layout

Having regard to the site layout, the proposed dwelling would be located some 175m further west than the existing farmhouse and would require the creation of a new residential curtilage within the countryside. Whilst it is accepted that the existing curtilage and dwelling would be removed, the current proposal, together with the associated outbuilding, solar, drainage and heating requirements and additional planting proposed would be significantly larger than the existing curtilage area. Although the drainage and heating elements would be hidden underground this area would extend into two fields thus reducing the amount of agricultural land.

Furthermore, the proposal is reliant on the landscaping mitigation to seek to make it acceptable in landscape terms. This landscaping is shown outside of the identified residential curtilage. It is however considered that this ancillary infrastructure should be included within the identified curtilage area and form part of the same planning unit.

The Parish Council considers it appropriate to demolish the existing dwelling although from the officers site visit, it was noted that the brickwork and roof appear in a good state of repair although the windows and some internal elements (kitchen ceiling/bedroom floor) are in need of replacement. There is no structural report suggesting that the property is beyond repair and regardless of this, the relocation of the dwelling from its current siting is not considered to be justified in this instance.

To accord with Policy DM20, replacement dwellings should not generally exceed 30% of the floor space of the existing property. In this case, the existing dwelling is a substantial 4-bedroomed property with three reception rooms, amounting to approximately 136m². (This measurement is taken from the dimensions indicated on the original approved plans from 1949 due to the lack of a scaled survey drawing).

The proposal would result in a dwelling of just over 218m², an increase of over 82m² and an increase of more than 60% in relation to the floorspace of the existing property. Whilst larger properties could be considered appropriate where they area to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier, the application is not supported with any such justification. Furthermore, Policy DM20 requires replacement dwellings to be of an appropriate design, scale and appearance in keeping with the rural character of the area which is not achieved by this proposal.

As the proposal would provide a significantly larger dwelling some distance from any other built form in the area, it is considered to be contrary to Policy DM20 in view of its size and impact on the character and appearance of this part of the site. It is further noted that the AONB Position Statement on Housing suggests that 120m² could be an appropriate size for an essential worker's dwelling with a maximum additional space of 30m² if a farm office is also required. The proposal would exceed this by some margin. The Management Plan produced by the AONB office includes policies which Local Authorities should have regard to in determining proposals with criteria relating to size and visual impact which are similar to the Council's policy framework.

Proposals should not generate a need for additional ancillary development and should not replace a temporary or abandoned dwelling. Having regard to these latter criteria, although the applicant is currently living in an unauthorised mobile home on the holding, it is understood that the existing dwelling was occupied until October 2022 and without information to advise otherwise, could be reoccupied with some repair/refurbishment.

Policy DM21 relates specifically to agricultural dwellings. Such dwellings are required to be well-related to existing farm buildings. In this instance, the proposed dwelling would be in excess of 120m away from the barn. The existing dwelling is approximately 19m from the barn. The proposal would remove the access to the existing dwelling and barn where there is a large roller shutter door and relocate the dwelling some distance away from the barn and remote from its vehicular access which seems impractical. Further, in this location, there are a scattering of buildings which are clustered around the crossroads formed by the dual carriageway, Howgare Road and Martin Drove End. Relocating a large dwelling further from this cluster and associated farm building would be unacceptable and would result in significant intrusion in the landscape.

The proposed 2-storey dwelling and farm office together with triple garage building with accommodation above have a combined substantial footprint which in turn, generates a significant mass and scale of built form in an area where there is presently pastureland. This would have a dominant and incongruous visual impact which is not considered to be sympathetic to the environment and context of this sensitive rural area.

The proposed dwelling has been designed so as to reflect a barn conversion with large 'barn door style' openings front and rear and small narrower openings to the first floor although the form proposed is a much more domesticated version with elements (lack of symmetry to the rear and single storey projection) not typically found on a barn of this size. The proposed brick and timber cladding for the dwelling and garage building would complement each other and reflect the materials used on nearby dwellings and their outbuildings. Although the views of the Parish Council have been noted, the design of the proposed dwelling appears as an isolated building built and used as a dwelling, it is considered that the proposal would be an inappropriate addition to this rural location, significantly altering the impact of built development on this part of the site where there is presently an open field which rises up from the road.

The AONB office note that the proposal includes 6 roof lights, three of which would serve bedrooms where there are other windows. One ensuite has a very small window in addition to the roof light although the bathroom and other ensuite do not have any other form of glazing. It is considered that the bathroom window could be accommodated within a dormer window to reduce the impact on the Dark Sky Reserve although this would be more difficult to achieve for the east facing ensuite. Overall, it is considered that the dwelling could be designed more sympathetically to reduce potential light spill, and this adds to the harm that would result from the proposal in landscape terms.

Landscape impact on the character and appearance of the Natural Landscape (AONB)

The submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a thorough and accurate review of the landscape baseline and identifies the key visual receptors. The conclusions of the LVIA and the resulting ability to positively influence design and layout is welcome. However, whilst it could be argued that views of the landscape from the road is the way most people observe the landscape, in the proposed location, the new buildings would be in an elevated position above Howgare Road and could therefore be perceived above the existing hedgerows from both directions along the main road.

The information supporting the application indicates that the proposed siting has been selected based on the topography that dips here, creating an opportunity to tuck a new building into the landscape and reference is made to the restoration of an old field boundary. However, this field boundary is not historic and is of no relevance in this context. As such the rationale for selecting this location for the new dwelling is not justified other than being able to utilise existing tracks. The result would be a new dwelling (and associated elements) in the countryside that is detached from its function and due to its scale and location would be dominant in views from both Howgare Road and the main road.

While the mitigation proposals would eventually help to screen the development, the proposed landscape framework of small irregular shaped copses does not reflect the existing wider landscape character which is made up of large fields, hedged boundaries and large woodland blocks. The proposed site has the

appearance of a quarried chalk pit feature. These features are generally left to naturally vegetate once the pit is dug out; therefore, the arrangement of proposed mitigation is considered inappropriate in layout, as it seeks to use the landform to limit visual impacts both locally and in the wider context.

The curtilage of the residential element should contain all of the required infrastructure to support the dwelling. The solar arrays are detached from the dwelling and are located too high on the slope, creating their own unacceptable impacts on the landscape. Locating the array within the curtilage would provide a clearly defined residential curtilage as distinct from the surrounding agricultural land.

It is noted that the application has been supported with documentation that seeks to justify the location of the new dwelling remote from any other built form and in this sensitive rural location. However, it is not considered that the mitigation proposed would offset the harmful impacts of the proposal and its adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and wider landscape.

Residential amenity

There are no immediate adjoining residential properties with a few dwellings located to the southeastern side of the main A354. It is not considered that the proposal would have any impact on the occupiers of properties across the road.

The main reason for the proposed relocation of the replacement dwelling is due to the noise, which is generated from the A354, the dual carriageway adjacent to the site. It is noted that the road was dualled after the original farmhouse was built in the late 1940s.

The submitted Noise Assessment clearly identifies that noise levels at the existing property are significantly higher than in an approximate location for the proposed dwelling. The survey indicates that ambient noise levels are 15dBA lower at the proposed site with maximum nighttime levels some 20dBA lower than the existing dwelling. However, whilst it is accepted that the vast majority of windows, if not all, in the existing property are single glazed and in need of repair, the report does not provide any assessment of the possibility of refurbishing the existing dwelling to a level which would reduce the ambient noise levels within it to an acceptable degree.

The Council's Environmental Health team acknowledge that the proposed replacement dwelling would offer an appropriate level of amenity in terms of noise guidelines recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Ecology

The application is supported with ecological surveys which identify that the existing dwelling shows no evidence of bat roosts with potential roost features more likely to be a result of rats or squirrels. Some trees are to be removed in order to create an access to the existing property. None of these trees were considered suitable to support bats or are worthy of protection. A mature ash tree is proposed to be retained as it supports an established rookery and jackdaw roosting site. As such, there are no objections to the loss of the existing dwelling on ecological grounds.

With regard to increasing biodiversity, the proposal includes additional planting, and the dwelling is indicated as having 2 swift boxes included within its fabric. These measures could be secured through a suitably worded condition were approval to be recommended.

Highway safety, access and parking

The proposed dwelling would be accessed via an existing farm gate situated approximately 150m away from the access to the existing dwelling and barn on Howgare Road. Beyond this access into the site would be a further gate/cattle grid into the proposed residential curtilage to the north. The existing farm track to the southeast would continue towards the barn.

Howgare Road is not classified and there are no proposed alterations to the access onto the highway so the Highway Authority standing advice applies. In this instance therefore, the proposal should have adequate turning facilities to allow for vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear. The proposed site layout shows that this would be possible and could be secured through a condition which could also ensure that parking for the new dwelling does not interfere with the farm access.

Although the existing access onto the road is gated to ensure livestock do not leave the field, the proposed gated domestic access is set back in excess of the required distance from the highway.

The proposal is for a 4-bedroom property which would generate a recommended parking provision of 3 car parking spaces and 4 secure cycle parking spaces in accordance with current NFDC parking standards. The proposal provides a garage, car port and adequate space on the drive for a third vehicle. The garage building also includes an implement store which could be used for the parking of a car and space for 4 cycles. This is acceptable in accordance with standards.

The proposal would remove the existing access to the barn and dwelling. Although there are large vehicular doors to the barn to the southeast, vehicular access would be from the rear of the building. These access arrangements would be acceptable.

Habitat Mitigation and off-site recreational impact

Habitat Mitigation

Although in a poor state of repair, the existing dwelling at Sundown Farm was occupied until late 2022. As the proposal would involve removing this dwelling, there is no material net increase in the number of dwellings and therefore no Habitat Mitigation is required.

Phosphate neutrality and impact on River Avon SAC

For the reason given above, as a replacement dwelling, there is no increase in the likely phosphate loading on the River Avon and so the proposal would not generate a requirement to provide phosphates mitigation.

Air Quality

To ensure that impacts on international nature conservation sites are adequately mitigated, a financial contribution is required towards monitoring and, if necessary (based on future monitoring outcomes) managing or mitigating air quality effects within the New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. There is potential for traffic-related nitrogen air pollution (including NO_x, nitrogen deposition and ammonia) to affect the internationally important Annex 1 habitats for which the New Forest SAC was designated, and by extension those of the other international designations. Given the uncertainties in present data, a contribution is required to undertake ongoing monitoring of the effects of traffic emissions on sensitive locations. A monitoring strategy will be implemented to provide the earliest possible

indication that the forms of nitrogen pollution discussed (including ammonia concentrations) are beginning to affect vegetation, so that, if necessary, measures can be taken to mitigate the impact and prevent an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC habitats from occurring. For the reason given above, as a replacement dwelling, there is no increase in the likely air quality monitoring impacts and so the proposal would not generate a requirement to provide mitigation in this regard.

In response to the requirements of the recently adopted 'Air Quality Assessments in New Development Supplementary Planning Document 2022, were approval to be recommended, the applicant would be expected to provide information explaining the measures that they would take to reduce the potential adverse impact new development can have upon air quality, thereby lessening the negative effects upon health and wellbeing. In view of the recommendation, this information has not been sought at this stage.

Developer Contributions

As part of the development, subject to any relief being granted the following amount Community Infrastructure Levy will be payable:

Type	Proposed Floorspace (sq/m)	Existing Floorspace (sq/m)	Net Floorspace (sq/m)	Chargeable Floorspace (sq/m)	Rate	Total
Dwelling houses	202		202	202	£80/sqm	£23,680.62 *

Subtotal:	£23,680.62
Relief:	£0.00
Total Payable:	£23,680.62

11 OTHER MATTERS

The comments of the Parish Council have been noted although at present, the existing dwelling is seen from limited angles in view of the level of vegetation around it. Whilst the detached outbuilding has collapsed, the house itself is not considered to be an eyesore.

There has been a query (from the AONB office) with regard to the specified type of oak tree although this is a matter which could be resolved should permission have been forthcoming.

12 CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal is considered to be contrary to policies DM20 and DM21 of the Local Plan Part 2 and STR2 and ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1 in that it would result in a significantly larger structure than the existing dwelling which, by reason of its siting and design, would have a greater impact on the character and appearance of this sensitive, designated rural landscape. Although mitigation and landscaping has been proposed to try to limit the impact of the replacement dwelling in its proposed new siting, it is not considered that these measures would address these visual impacts in a satisfactory manner to the extent that the proposal would comply with paragraph 182 of the NPPF which states 'the scale and extent of development within ... designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.' As such, there are significant objections raised to this proposal.

Whilst it is noted that there would be some benefit to the proposal as occupants would be located further away from the A354 and an access close to the junction of Howgare Road with the dual carriageway would be closed, these matters are not considered to be sufficient to offset the visual harm which would be created by proposals. As such, the re-siting of the dwelling and its significantly larger scale and mass would result in an inappropriate form of development with an unacceptable impact on the countryside, the landscape and the special qualities and purposes of the Cranborne Chase Natural Landscape.

As such refusal of planning permission is recommended

13 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The proposal would result in a large detached dwelling with a two-storey outbuilding which would represent an increase of 60% of the floorspace of the original dwelling having a resultant harmful impact on the character of the area due to its scale and mass. This impact would be compounded due to its proposed location as the replacement dwelling would appear as an isolated feature within the countryside. As such, by reason of the size and scale of the proposed dwelling and its isolated location, remote from the existing farm buildings, it would have an unacceptable impact on the rural character of the countryside contrary to Policies DM20 and DM21 of the Local Plan Part 2 for the New Forest outside of the National Park and policies STR2 and ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1.
2. The proposal would result in an isolated dwelling and associated residential curtilage which would encroach into the countryside and Natural Landscape (AONB). This visual intrusion would be compounded by the provision of rooflights to the dwelling which would impact on the Dark Sky Reserve. The proposal is therefore considered to have an unacceptable impact on the special qualities of the Cranborne Chase Natural Landscape and represent an inappropriate and unsympathetic form of development that would be contrary to policies STR2 and ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1 for the New Forest outside of the National Park and paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

Further Information:

Vivienne Baxter

Telephone: 023 8028 5442

NFDC



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

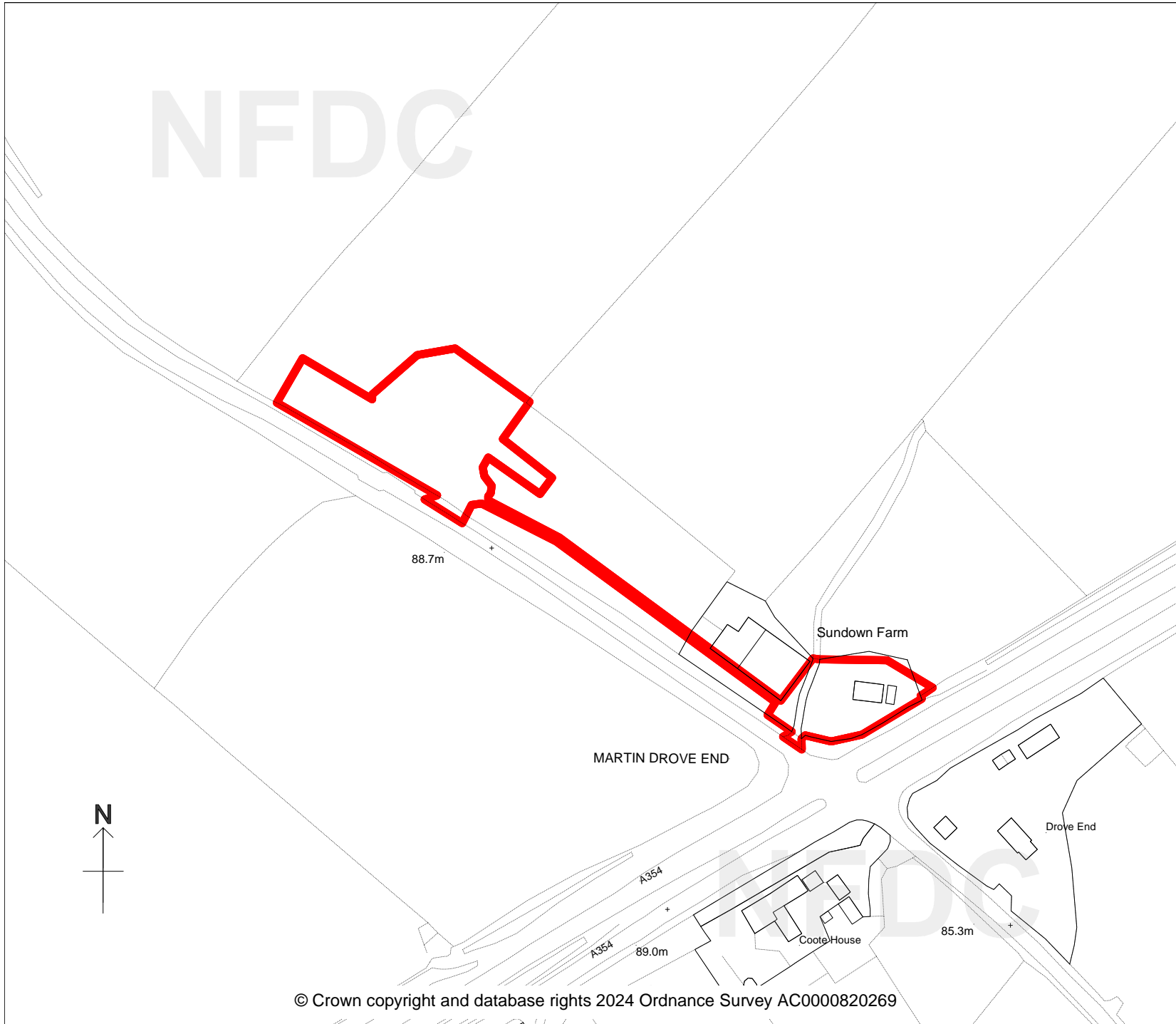
Tel: 023 8028 5000
www.newforest.gov.uk

David Norris
Service Manager
Development Management
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA

PLANNING COMMITTEE

February 2024

Sundown Farm
Drove End
Martin
23/10819



Scale 1:2000

N.B. If printing this plan from the internet, it will not be to scale.