

**Subject:** CASTLE FARM RETIREMENT HOME

**Date:** Monday, 20 January 2014 18:41:40 Greenwich Mean Time

**From:** Ken Morgan

## **CASTLE FARM RETIREMENT HOME**

Castle Farm has been a retirement/care home for almost 40 years, well respected, a home for many Lytchett residents over the years and an important source of employment for Lytchett.

The accommodation was refurbished and extended to approximately its present form 25 years ago. Castle Farm was then registered for 24 residents. The accommodation comprised 9 x single rooms, 4/5 x double rooms and 3/4 triples.

Since then, statutory standards and resident/family expectations have moved on so, with the need now being overwhelmingly for single rooms albeit with some opportunity for couples, either as doubles or as linked singles. For a short period this change in need was met by accommodating a few residents within Castle Farm house across the yard. This was not ideal and is discontinued. Presently therefore, Castle Farm can accommodate only 17 residents in individual rooms.

Generally new care homes are built with close to 60 spaces in order to achieve economies of scale, efficient staff ratios etc. Clearly Castle Farm is way below this ideal so its business model has to be reviewed.

We are therefore looking at ways to bring the capacity back to its registration level of 24 rooms, whilst retaining the special country character of the home which has proved very attractive, especially for families and their relatives from the rural areas west of Poole.

An upward extension replacing much of the single storey roof profile has been explored and, whilst technically feasible, the structural complexities make this a very costly solution, quite apart from the disruption and temporary closure of existing spaces.

We also looked at a single storey wing extending out at the east side but this covers too much garden area and feels cramped against the trees and site boundaries.

Our favoured solution is a compact 2 storey wing along the east side of the building, 4 rooms on the upper floor and 3 at ground level plus additional day room space. A simple corridor connection through the roof at first floor allows use of the existing lift and an efficient staffing/servicing arrangement. The site of the extension is over an existing conservatory, a paved terrace and a small parking area. The covering over of these parts will not detract from the landscaped setting and, further, parking space is presently over provided.

Castle Farm is outside of the 'Village Envelope' and lies within Green Belt where normally further development is resisted. However, we believe that special circumstances may be applicable here given the crucial social need to provide and maintain suitable accommodation for our increasingly aged population. Castle Farm already provides such essential accommodation but, because its capacity has been eroded by the need for enhanced standards, some limited growth is now essential to ensure its continued contribution.

This is the first 'airing' of these ideas. The Purbeck planners have not yet been consulted and, before doing that, we thought it important to gauge the views of the Parish Council.

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