# Local concerns rise as luxury Dorset home faces redevelopment plans



Situated atop the picturesque Purbeck peninsula in Dorset, a modern five-bedroom luxury home has become the centre of local controversy due to its recent sale and development plans. The architect-designed property, boasting three bathrooms, four reception rooms, an expansive glass frontage showcasing views over Poole Harbour, and a south-facing garden with a swimming pool, was purchased in December 2023 for £2.2 million by a London-based buyer named Justin.

Despite the home's many attractive features—including underfloor heating, a roll-top bath in the master suite, and expansive balcony views—Justin has not taken up residence. Instead, the house has remained empty since the purchase, showing signs of neglect such as a partially removed front hedge, cardboard covering some windows, and a locked metal barrier blocking the driveway. Local residents have reported never having seen Justin on Agglestone Road, the privately maintained street on which the property is located.

The speculation among villagers is that Justin never intended to inhabit the home but rather to demolish it and construct a larger, more opulent property in its place. Indeed, Dorset Council recently granted planning permission for exactly this type of redevelopment, allowing the demolition of the current house to make way for a new build. This trajectory mirrors patterns observed in Sandbanks, an affluent nearby area known for billionaires purchasing waterfront properties only to raze them and replace them with substantially grander mansions.

Adrian Dunford of Tailor Made Estate Agency commented on the trend: “Most people when they buy a house will maybe redo the kitchen and bathroom and redecorate to make the property their own. But when really wealthy people don’t like a house, they’ll just say: ‘Let’s put a new house on there.’ It’s a very normal thing to do here.” Last summer, for example, a 117-year-old bungalow in Sandbanks was sold for £13.5 million, with plans submitted for a 10,000 square foot replacement.

However, Agglestone Road and the village of Studland, just three miles from Sandbanks, have a very different character and culture. Unlike the exclusive and conspicuous lifestyle of Sandbanks—with its emphasis on displays of wealth, landscaped gardens, and jet skis—the Studland community is rooted in a quieter, nature-focused way of life. The village is known for its rich ecology; residents commonly discuss local wildlife such as beavers and rare bats, engage in community activities like Pilates classes, and value the tranquility of their surroundings.

Pippa Lightbown, a former tenant of the house who offered to purchase it, expressed surprise at the plans for redevelopment: “It seems such a waste. It’s a perfectly good house, a very fine house to live in. I’m amazed the National Trust didn’t put up more of a fight about it – I’m very surprised on an ecology basis.” The National Trust owns much of the surrounding heathland, and Studland is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which restricts development within 400 metres of the heathland to ensure any changes enhance the natural environment.

Long-standing residents fear that the approval for Justin’s project may signal the beginning of a “Sandbanks-style” transformation of Studland, fundamentally altering its character and putting pressure on the infrastructure. The narrow, unpaved track that serves as Agglestone Road is maintained by residents but is ill-equipped to handle the traffic and heavy vehicles associated with large-scale construction work. Neighbours also note concerns about potential loss of sunlight and privacy caused by the new building.

Bonnie, a resident of forty years, voiced a determined stance: “Studland is Studland and it must remain that way. We’ll never let it turn into Sandbanks.” Tim Watton, the village parish clerk, contrasts the two localities, declaring Studland “a lot nicer than Sandbanks!”

The community’s aversion to the extravagant displays typical in Sandbanks is palpable. Locals describe Sandbanks as a place where everything from the house to the jetty and garden is openly flaunted, a stark contrast to Studland’s understated charm. The village is famed for its natural beauty, including four miles of unspoiled sandy beaches (without homes directly fronting them), woodland, historic landmarks like the 12th-century church, and protected sites such as the world-famous Knoll Beach nudist area.

Efforts to maintain the village’s heritage were also evident when proposals for a sympathetic eco-friendly renovation of the Knoll House Hotel were recently denied by local authorities, despite parish council support. This decision, coupled with Dorset Council’s approval of the large new build on Agglestone Road, has heightened tensions within the community.

Property values in Studland, driven upward by the influence of Sandbanks and the general desirability of the area, have risen steadily, making it challenging for younger residents and longstanding families to afford homes. Executive properties, from bungalows on the Glebe estate to period houses in the village proper, now command multimillion-pound prices. The trend has also altered the demographic balance, with the proportion of second-home owners rising from around 15% two decades ago to approximately 50% today.

Jossy Parsons, a local shopkeeper who has lived in the village most of her life, described the changes, noting fewer young people able to remain due to affordability issues and that second-home owners are increasingly less frequent visitors, some owning multiple holiday properties. This shift affects the social fabric of the community, although business owners appreciate the economic contribution from visitors.

Local councillor Nick Boulter emphasised the importance of community, highlighting active participation in local clubs, volunteer work for the National Trust, and village events centred on social cohesion. He lamented that Justin had not yet contributed to the upkeep of the road, reflecting a degree of distance from village life: “He hasn’t even offered to contribute to the road upkeep! It’s not a great start before he moves in.”

The current state of the property and the contentious redevelopment plans encapsulate broader tensions between preserving local character and accommodating rising property demand in sought-after areas. Whether Justin ultimately resides in his new home or continues the pattern of absentee ownership common among wealthy offshore purchasers remains to be seen, but the impact of his plans on the Studland community is already a subject of significant discussion.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://fortitudoproperty.com/developments/luxury-waterfront-homes-salterns-marina/> - This URL provides information about luxury waterfront properties in Sandbanks, mirroring the luxurious redevelopment trends mentioned in the article. It highlights the exclusive nature of these properties and their appeal to affluent buyers.
2. <https://www.purbeckproperty.co.uk/properties-for-sale> - This website lists properties for sale in Wareham and surrounding areas, reflecting the broader property market trends in Dorset, which are relevant to the rising property values and changing demographics in Studland.
3. <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/for-sale/property/isle-of-purbeck/> - This URL supports the discussion about property sales in the Isle of Purbeck, an area that includes Studland. It provides insight into the local property market and the challenges of affordability faced by long-term residents.
4. <https://alburyandhall.co.uk/properties/?availability%5B%5D=5&availability%5B%5D=90&department=residential-sales> - This website features luxury properties in locations like Swanage, highlighting the high-end real estate available in the Dorset area. It aligns with the trends of affluent buyers purchasing properties for redevelopment.
5. <https://www.placesforpeople.co.uk/new-homes/find-a-new-home/peninsula-view/> - This URL presents luxury residential developments in Dorset, such as Peninsula View in Poundbury. It demonstrates the ongoing trend of modern luxury housing developments in the region.
6. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/studland-beach> - This National Trust webpage provides information about Studland, highlighting its status as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It supports the article's mention of Studland's ecological significance and the role of the National Trust in preserving local environments.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14649127/village-Dorset-fighting-millionaire-mansions.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data