

The DNA of Dorney: An Analysis of Housing Density in Dorney and its Settlements

One of the major contributors to Dorney's unique DNA sitting, as we do, in between Maidenhead, Burnham and Slough, is the low density of our housing.

This is cited in a number of planning documents produced by Bucks Council – the purpose of which is to provide planning guardrails:

1. Dorney's Landscape Character Assessment 2011 (LCA):

- a. Bucks Council: *"Landscape Character Assessment (LCAs) describe and record what makes parts of Buckinghamshire different, distinctive or special. LCAs encourage sensitive siting and the design of development that minimises harm to the character and the valued qualities of Buckinghamshire's landscapes."*
- b. Dorney: *"Settlement is dispersed and spread linearly along roads or as common edge settlement, with a strong historic character (e.g. Dorney and Dorney Common). Isolated properties and farmsteads are also scattered through the landscape."*
- c. Landscape Guidelines:
 - i. *Conserve open views, particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.*
 - ii. *Monitor vertical development [e.g. houses] along the floodplain, which will impact greatly on the low lying, open character.*
 - iii. *Maintain the historic openness of Dorney Common and conserve the loose linear settlement character preventing infilling and nucleation."*

2. Dorney's Conservation Area Appraisal (1996):

- a. *"Because of Dorney's low density residential layout, there is very little hierarchy of space within the village."*

3. Boveney's Conservation Area Appraisal (1996)

- a. *"Consequently, there is little in the way of townscape views, nevertheless, this rural, low density character is a quality that the District Council regards as being worthy of preservation."*
- b. *A number of key landscape views onto Dorney Common and across to Windsor Castle exist from within the settlement."*

The following analysis of Dorney's net site area housing density (dwellings and gardens/hectare) indicates, by Settlement, the current housing density. The right hand column of the first chart assesses the housing density of the two current Eton "aspirations" for Boveney Court Farm buildings and Court Farm.



Current and Proposed Houses

Dorney Parish Housing Density						
Approximate Numbers	Current Houses			Proposed Planning Applications		
	Net Site Area		Density	Net Site Area	Total	Density
Settlements	Hectares	Houses	Houses/ha	Hectares	Houses	Houses/acre
Lake End	1.9	12	6			
Dorney Reach	29.5	177	6			
Dorney Village	14.2	73	5			
Dorney Common (inc Court Farm site)	10.2	29	3			
Boveney (South of Cress Brook)	8.5	9	1			
Totals	64.3	300	5			
			Settlement			Site
Court Farm Site (build/garden area only)	1.19	4.0	3	1.19	15	13
Boveney Farm Site (build/garden area only)	0.57	0.0	1	0.57	12	21
						Refused
<i>Net Site Area: dwellings and gardens only</i>						

Houses based on specific Settlement Density and on highest Density (Lake End)

Dorney Parish Housing Density				
Approximate Numbers	Proposed Allocation based on Settlement Density		Proposed Allocation based on Lake End Density (highest)	
Settlements				
Lake End			6	
Dorney Reach				
Dorney Village				
Dorney Common (inc Court Farm site)	3			
Boveney (South of Cress Brook)	1			
Totals				
Court Farm Site (build/garden area only)	3	4 existing	8	4 existing/4 new
Boveney Farm Site (build/garden area only)	1	1 New	4	4 new

The Bucks Planning Committee voted 6-1 against the Boveney application, citing *"substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt"* due to *"the increase in built form on the site, the increase in the number of buildings, and the bulk and massing of the new buildings"* – essentially, high housing density. Despite the application's 12 houses, density calculations (using Lake End's and Dorney Reach's highest figure of 6 houses/ha) suggest it should have a maximum of four new houses (second graphic, right hand column).

Dorney Parish comprises five distinct settlements: Boveney, Dorney Common, Dorney Village, Dorney Reach, and Lake End. Each has a unique history and development. The Court Farm Proposals pertain to Dorney Common, characterised as a low-density linear settlement along the Common's edges.

Dorney Common currently has a housing density of 3 houses/ha, while Dorney Parish averages 5 houses/ha. The Court Farm Proposals aim for 15 houses on a small plot, resulting in a housing density of approximately 13 houses/ha – four times higher than Dorney Common's average.

To align with planning policies and using the parish's maximum housing density, Dorney Reach's and Lake End's density of six houses/hectare, the Court Farm site should have a maximum of eight houses, not fifteen (second graphic, right hand column).

This suggests a likelihood of Bucks Council treating the Court Farm application similarly to the Boveney one.

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