FOR SALE

Exciting Opportunity to Acquire this Attractive Grade II Listed Property In Central Dorchester

GRAHAM SIBBALD



Sleeping Bear Hotel

32-33 High West Street, Dorchester, DT1 1UP

///equity.reef.standing

Offers in the region of £1,550,000 - Freehold

Find out more at **www.g-s.co.uk**

- **Attractive Grade II Listed Georgian property that presents well throughout**
- **Located in the centre of Dorchester with the benefit of car parking**
- **29 character bedrooms with en-suite facilities**
- **Operated as a bedroom focussed business with comfortable public areas**
- **Dining room, bar & function room**
- **Potential to convert under-utilised space into additional bedrooms**
- **Highly profitable hotel - Net Operating Profit for year ending March 2026 of £289,576**
- **Offers in the region of £1,550,000 - Freehold**



INTRODUCTION

GRAHAM + SIBBALD IS DELIGHTED TO OFFER FOR SALE THE FREEHOLD INTEREST IN THE SLEEPING BEAR HOTEL, WHICH IS AN ATTRACTIVE GRADE II PERIOD PROPERTY THAT IS WELL LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF DORCHESTER.

This historic property is ideally located to enjoy the historic county town and a good base from which to explore the picturesque county of Dorset with the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site running from Old Harry Rocks near Swanage in East Dorset to Orcombe Point near Exmouth, being within close reach of Dorchester.

The hotel has benefited from extensive investment in recent years with works including external and internal redecoration so that it now presents well throughout. Previously the property was known as The Wessex Royale Hotel and operated as a full-service hotel. Under the current ownership, it was rebranded as the Sleeping Bear Hotel and now operates as a bedroom focussed business.

LOCATION - ///**equity.reef.standing**

The Sleeping Bear Hotel occupies a prominent and central position within Dorchester, fronting High West Street (B1350), the town's principal thoroughfare. High West Street forms the main east—west route through Dorchester, linking with the A35 to the east and reconnecting with the A35 to the west of Poundbury, the acclaimed urban extension to the town being developed under the stewardship of the Duchy of Cornwall.

Dorchester is situated in the southern part of Dorset, a highly diverse county encompassing the Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole conurbation, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and attractive countryside including the Purbeck Hills, Chesil Beach and the National Trust's Cerne Abbas Giant. The A35, one of the county's primary arterial routes, runs immediately to the south of the town, providing convenient access eastwards to Poole and westwards to Honiton and the A30. As a result, Dorchester serves as an excellent base from which to explore Dorset and the wider Southwest.

The town benefits from a rich and varied history, with origins dating back to the Iron Age and later development as a Roman garrison established around AD 70. Dorchester is also renowned as the childhood home of Thomas Hardy, who used the town as the inspiration for the fictional Casterbridge in The Mayor of Casterbridge. Today, Dorchester functions as an important regional centre, offering a range of national retailers alongside several established industrial estates supporting a diverse business community.

Dorchester is served by a mainline railway station providing direct services to London, via Poole, Bournemouth, Southampton Airport and Winchester, ensuring excellent regional and national connectivity.

















THE PROPERTY

The Sleeping Bear Hotel is an attractive Grade II Listed former townhouse dating from the Georgian period. The property features an elegant and well-proportioned façade, with the site extending through to Prince's Street, which runs broadly parallel to High West Street.

The principal frontage is arranged over basement, ground and three upper floors and connects to a two-storey former stables building to the rear. The property is partially configured around a cobbled courtyard, which provides on-site parking and is accessed via an archway from Prince's Street. A single-storey extension to the rear of the main building accommodates the hotel's Function Room.

Internally, the hotel is well presented throughout and retains a wealth of period features, including an attractive feature staircase, fireplaces and decorative cornicing. In keeping with the character of a period property, the guest bedrooms vary in size, layout and individual features, although all are presented to a broadly consistent standard.

The guest lounge is situated at the front of the hotel and benefits from direct pedestrian access from High West Street. Adjoining the lounge is a reception and office area, which offers potential for conversion into additional bedroom accommodation, subject to any necessary consents. To the rear of the lounge is a small bar area that opens into the main Function Room. A dining area is positioned to the rear of the former office space and connects directly with a commercial kitchen.

To the left-hand side (as you face the property) of the archway fronting Prince's Street is a self-contained office. This is currently occupied by a third party and is excluded from the sale of the hotel. This is available by separate negotiation at an asking price of £120,000.

Externally, the cobbled courtyard provides parking for approximately seven vehicles. A metal external staircase offers secondary means of escape from the upper floors of the front section of the building into the courtyard.

GUEST ACCOMMODATION

The hotel features 29 well-appointed and comfortable bedrooms, comprising:

Room Category	Number
Standard Double/Twin Rooms	17
Deluxe Rooms	8
Family Rooms	2
Single Rooms	2
Total	29

The guest accommodation is arranged throughout the various elements of the hotel. Four bedrooms are located at ground floor level, with a further 15 bedrooms on the first floor, five bedrooms on the second floor and five bedrooms on the third floor, the latter benefiting from dormer windows and characterful sloping ceilings.

All bedrooms are en suite and are equipped with flat-screen televisions, tea and coffee making facilities, and a range of case goods and seating, which vary across the bedroom inventory. The majority of bathrooms comprise a bath with shower over and are modern in appearance. A number of bedrooms retain original period features, including fireplaces, panelled walls and exposed beams, enhancing the character of the accommodation.





PUBLIC AREAS

The lounge and bar area provides seating for approximately 25 covers. Leading directly from the bar, the Function Room is a large, open-plan rectangular space with capacity for up to 70 covers. A central hallway incorporating a feature staircase provides access to the bar and Function Room in one direction and the dining area in the other.

At first floor level there is a small library area with a capacity for four guests. On the ground floor to the rear of the lounge there is a complimentary tea & coffee station.
The public areas are well presented throughout and offer a contemporary feel while retaining and complementing the period features of the property.

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

The hotel has a commercial kitchen that connects to the dining area. There is an office to the front of the property adjacent to the reception area. The basement contains the beer cellar, water tanks and storage areas, along with a former rifle range. There are store rooms/linen cupboards at various points on each of the upper floors.

THE BUSINESS

In 2024, the current owners acquired the Wessex Royale Hotel with a clear objective: to reimagine the operating model of a regional three-star period hotel. The aim was to address the continued rise in operating costs associated with facilities that many guests no longer prioritise—particularly in town-centre locations where a wide choice of cafés, restaurants and pubs already exists. At the time of the property's purchase, the hotel was operated as a full-service establishment. Since acquisition, the business has been restructured to focus on the provision of bedroom accommodation, with the commercial kitchen closed and the use of function facilities significantly reduced.

Guests are provided with information within each bedroom detailing the range of dining and drinking options available in Dorchester. In addition, guests can order food deliveries and make use of the hotel's dining facilities, along with its complimentary tea & coffee station.

Further operational efficiencies have been achieved through a reduction in reception opening hours. Outside of staffed hours, guests can access their allocated bedrooms via information sent to their mobile devices, together with a remote check-in and key-cutting system located within the hotel's lounge area. Guests requiring assistance can connect directly to a video concierge support system for guidance throughout the check-in process.

As a result of implementing a more focused operating model, the hotel has achieved a Net Operating Profit of £289,567 in its first full year of trading under current ownership (year ending March 2026).

Financial information is available in a virtual data room on request by interested parties.



FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

We are advised that all fixtures, fittings and other items associated with the running of the business are owned outright and shall be included within the sale, save for any items that might be leased or on finance, details of which can be provided on request. Prospective purchasers should satisfy themselves that the equipment is in full working order.

SERVICES

We have been advised that the property is connected to mains water, drainage, gas and electricity.

BUSINESS RATES

The VOA's website shows that the property's current Rateable Value in the 2023 Rating List is £93,000 * 0.555p = £52,114.50 (old base rate). New rating 2026 list is £144,000 rating * 0.430p = £61,920 (new base rate).









LICENCES
The property has the benefit of a premises licence.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT
In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire and Safety) Order 2005 we have assumed that an adequate Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out.

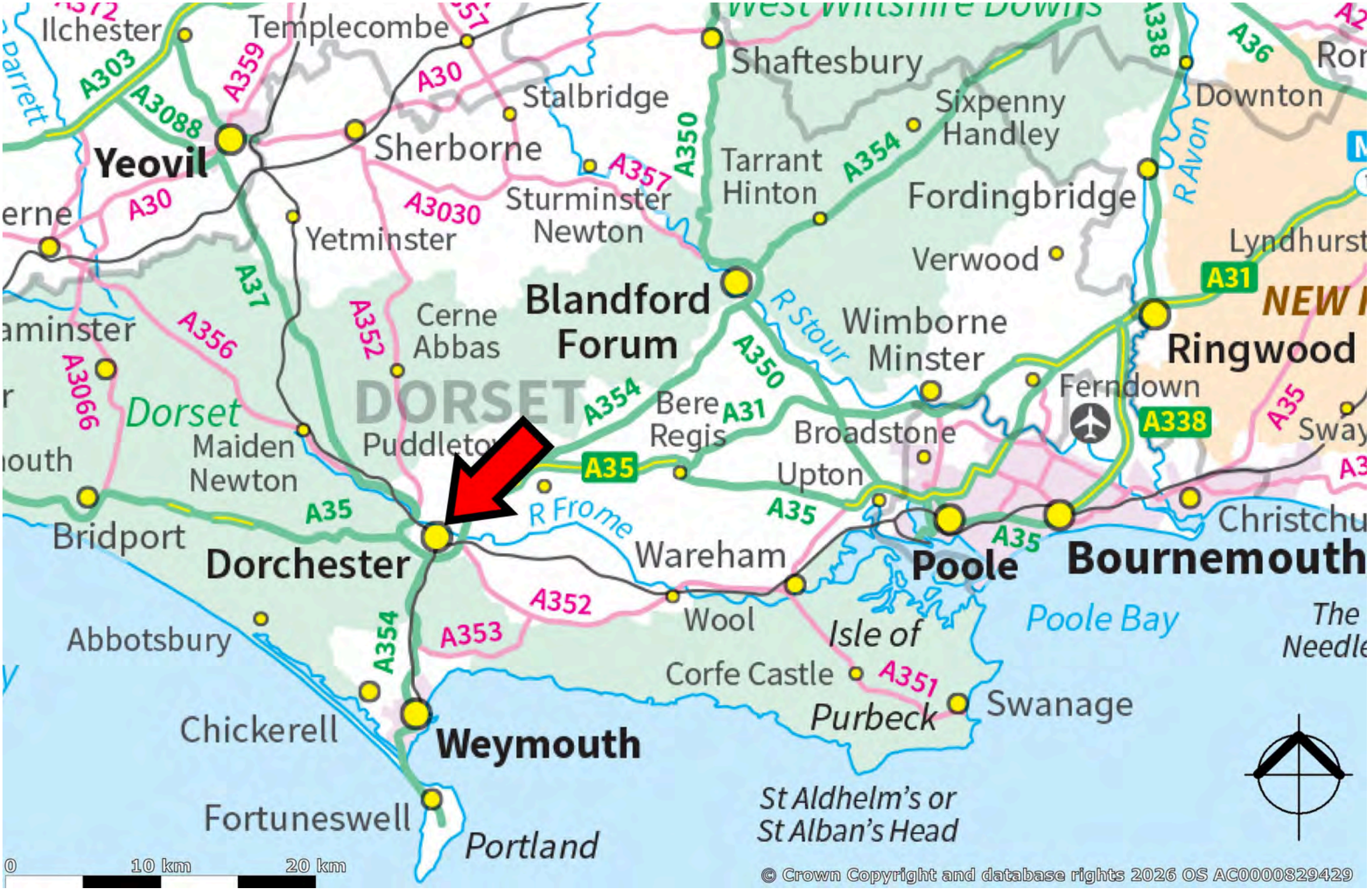
PLANNING
We understand that the Sleeping Bear Hotel, Dorchester is listed and further information is set out in the virtual data room. However, we recommend that all interested parties make their own enquiries regarding the hotel's planning status with the Local Planning Authority.

TENURE
The property is held freehold.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE
The hotel is a listed property.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING (AML)
Under HMRC and RICS regulations in addition to the Criminal Finances Act 2017, as property agents facilitating transactions, we are obliged to undertake anti money laundering due diligence for both the vendors (our client) and the purchasers involved in a transaction. As such, personal and or detailed financial and corporate information will be required before an offer can be accepted and a transaction can commence.




Ilchester
Templecombe
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Stalbridge
Shaftesbury
Sixpenny Handley
Downton
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A36
Yeovil
Sherborne
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A350
Tarrant Hinton
A354
Fordingbridge
R Avon
A30
A3030
Sturminster Newton
Yetminster
Verwood
Lyndhurst
A31
A37
Blandford Forum
R Stour
Wimborne Minster
Ringwood
A352
Cerne Abbas
A356
A350
A3066
DORSET
Ferndown
A338
A35
Dorset
A354
Bere Regis
A31
Broadstone
Maiden Newton
Puddletown
A35
Upton
R Frome
A35
Bridport
Dorchester
Wareham
A35
Poole
Bournemouth
A352
Wool
Poole Bay
Abbotsbury
A354
A353
Isle of Purbeck
Corfe Castle
A351
Swanage
Chickerell
Weymouth
St Aldhelm's or St Alban's Head
Fortuneswell
Portland
0
10 km
20 km
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METHOD OF SALE

Offers in the region of £1,550,000 are invited for the property's freehold interest to include contents but excluding personal items. Stock to be purchased separately at valuation. The self-contained office at 18 Prince's Street is available by separate negotiation for £120,000.

VAT

All prices quoted and offers made shall be deemed to be exclusive of VAT and VAT will be payable at the prevailing rate where applicable. Prospective purchasers should consult their accountant/solicitor for professional advice in this respect.

VIEWING ARRANGEMENTS

No direct approach may be made to the business. For an appointment to view, please contact the Vendor's agent, Graham + Sibbald, who are acting as joint sole selling agents with Christie & Co.

To arrange a viewing please contact:



GRAHAM SIBBALD

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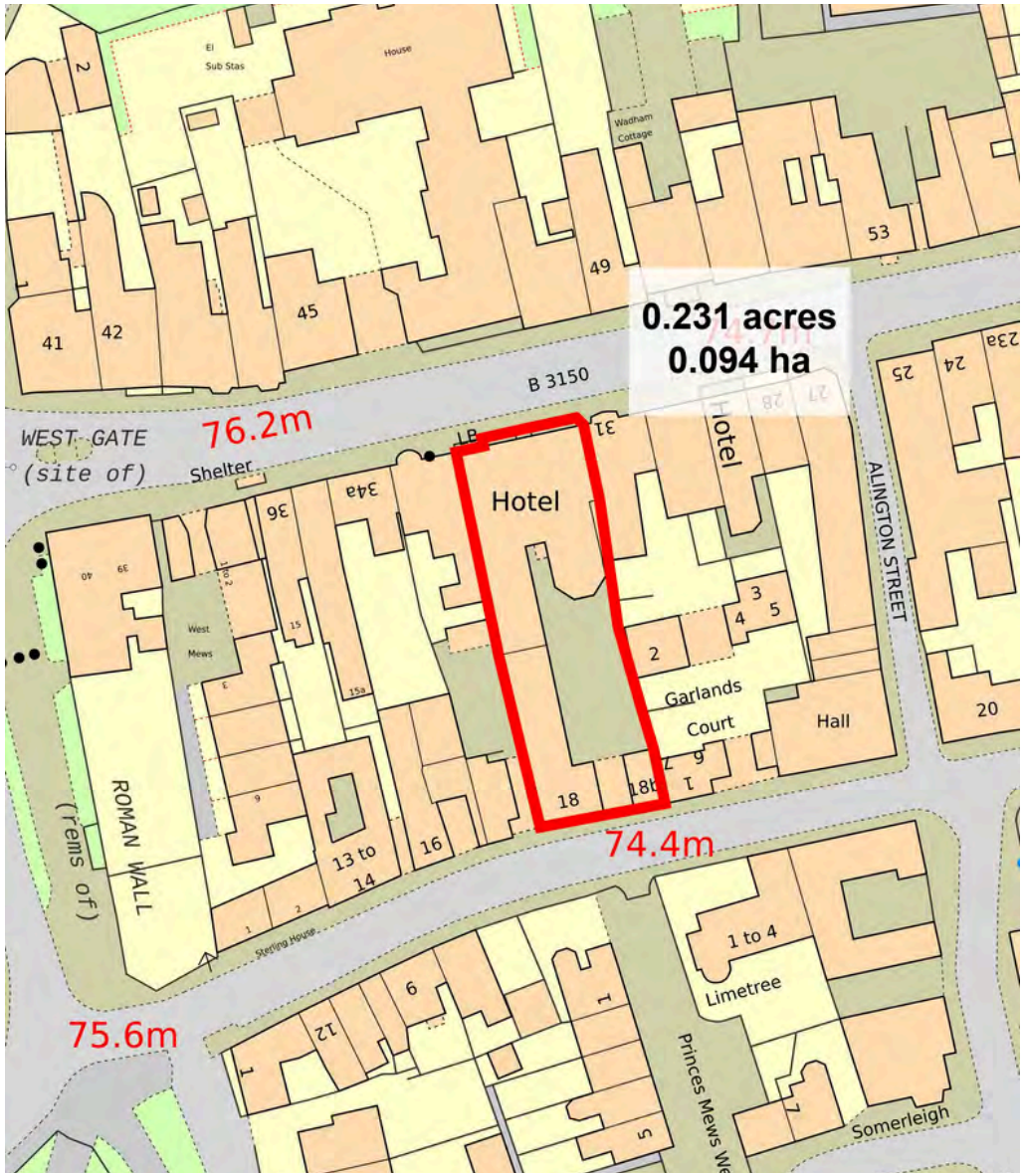

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