



Roderick James Architects LLP

## Design and Access Statement

24th December 2020

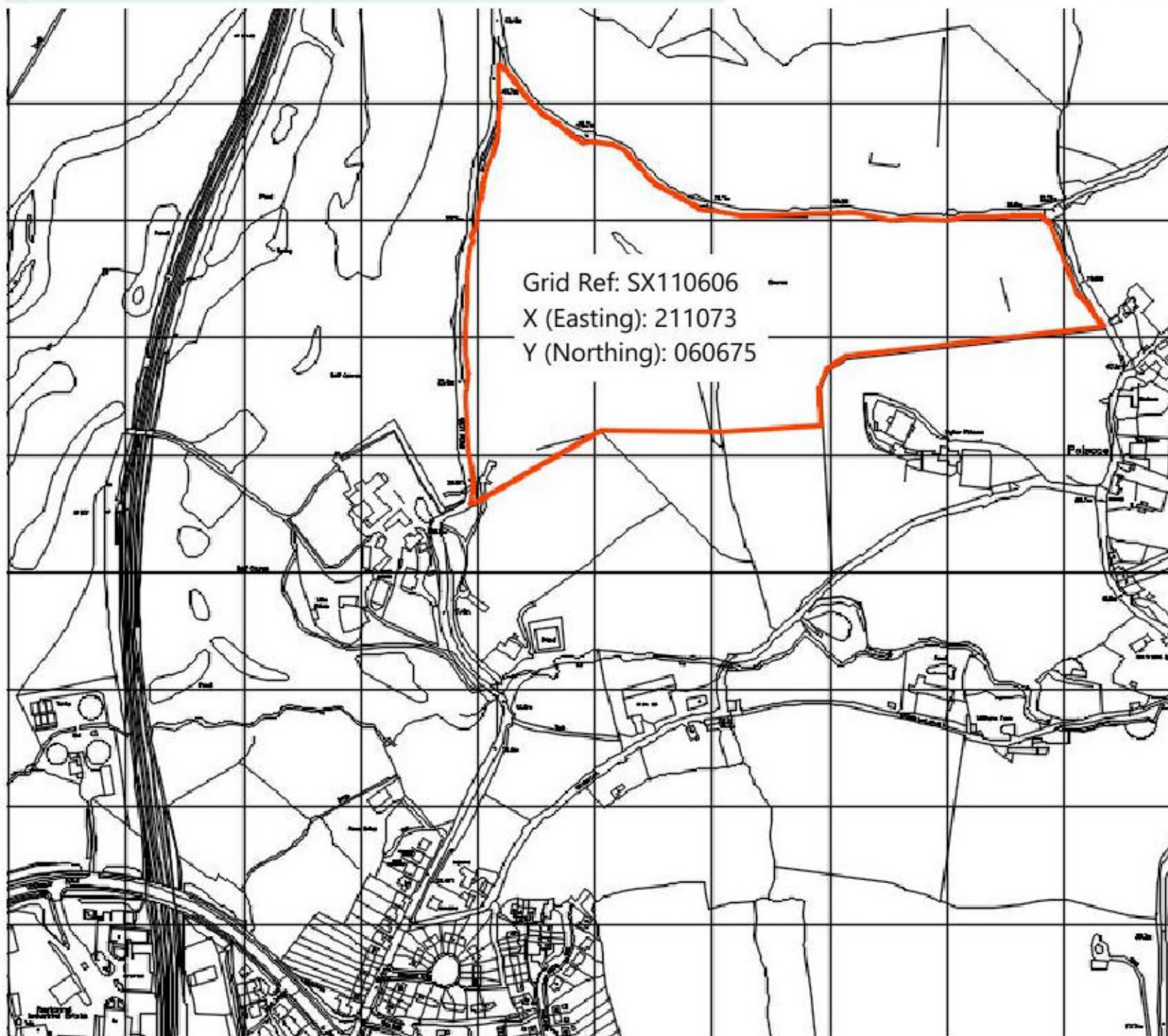


New Centre for the Teaching and Learning of Agronomy  
(including a café/restaurant, exhibition spaces, market area, and cookery school),  
20 no. Accommodation Units and Owner's House at  
**Gillyflower Farm (formerly Lostwithiel golf course),  
Cott Road, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0HQ.**





Left: Red circle indicates approx. location of Lostwithiel within Cornwall (image courtesy of [Cornwall Council](#))



Below: The Gillyflower Farm application site in relation to Lostwithiel is shown in red.

## Contents:

1. Preface.....	2
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Lostwithiel and the Site.....	5
4. Relevant Planning Policies.....	7
5. Pre-Application Advice.....	10
6. Community Consultation and Engagement.....	13
7. Design Statement .....	14
8. Artistic Impressions.....	21
9. Access Statement .....	26
10. Heritage Impact Assessment .....	29
11. Ecology.....	29
12. Arboricultural Survey & Impact Assessments.....	30
13. Flooding & Drainage.....	30
14. Geotechnical .....	31
15. Transport Statement.....	31
16. Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.....	32
17. Roderick James Architects LLP Profile.....	33

## 1. Preface

This Design and Access Statement has been compiled by Roderick James Architects LLP, who have been appointed by Sir Tim Smit and Alex Smit to assist with the detailed design proposals for a new centre for the teaching and learning of Agronomy, and 20 no. accommodation units and an owner's house.

The site is part of the former Lostwithiel Golf Course, situated along Cott Road on the edge of Lostwithiel in Cornwall.

PLEASE NOTE: information provided in this document has been informed by reports prepared by third-party consultants commissioned by the client with regards to this application. Photographs/maps not credited within the document are by RJALLP or the client team.



## 2. Introduction

At the end of 2016, Sir Tim Smit and his son Alex Smit purchased the former Lostwithiel Golf Course, located on Cott Road on the edge of Lostwithiel (on the road leading to the Duchy Nursery).

This site was purchased with the ambition of turning two-thirds of the existing course into the greatest rare orchard in Europe.

Sir Tim and Alex have been working with Philip McMillan Browse (a horticultural consultant who was one of the originators of the Eden Project, as well as a former horticultural director of, among other renowned gardens, The Lost Gardens of Heligan) to select many rare and historic varieties of fruit trees (Apples, Pears, Mulberries, Walnut, Gages, Damsons, etc.) for planting on the site, which has now been renamed **Gillyflower Farm**, after the apple variety found in a cottage garden near Truro, Cornwall around 1813.



Drone image looking towards Lostwithiel with the application site bounded in red and the rest of the golf course site bounded in blue.

To date, 2,972 fruit trees have been planted throughout the site, with another 1,000 trees due to be planted in and around the newly created Potager garden.

The one acre square Potager garden (modelled on the walled garden at The Lost Gardens of Heligan and reminiscent of the classic French kitchen garden) will be a reservoir of rare European vegetables, many of which are unfamiliar to the British palate.

Sir Tim and Alex have drawn on their experience and knowledge of working at The Lost Gardens of Heligan over the last thirty years (in protecting rare heritage varieties of fruits and vegetables that have disappeared from the popular food canon), and their ambition for Gillyflower Farm is to grow these rare European vegetables, and allow the public to taste them, via a new cookery school and tasting kitchen. Their objective is to cultivate a range of crops that can be grown by partner farmers and become a new range of economic crops that allows Lostwithiel to develop into a centre for the development of new food crops.

To achieve the aims and objectives of this project, there is a need to provide a new facility that is purpose made and suitable to cater for the needs of the teaching and training of the would-be horticulturalists, amateur gardeners, and horticultural students that will visit and stay at Gillyflower Farm.

This new facility is to be contained within a new main building on the site called The Hub. This building will contain exhibition, teaching and demonstration spaces, a market area, a café/restaurant with associated kitchen, cookery school and tasting kitchen, as well as a microbrewery, distillery, cider and fruit presses, and of course, a fruit storage area, designed to enable the fruit to ripen naturally.

Continued.



## 2. Introduction (continued.)

To ensure that Gillyflower Farm is accessible to all who wish to visit and learn, the proposed scheme also includes 20 accommodation units - called The Drums - of various sizes (from single-storey, one-bed units to two-storey, three-bed units). The Drums are to be made available for short term rent to people visiting and/or studying at Gillyflower Farm. These visiting groups could be single people, couples, friendship groups, families, students or business groups.

To assist with securing and maintaining the long-term management of Gillyflower Farm, the golf course (which is located over the road from the application site, and set within the valley on the banks of the River Fowey) has been painstakingly re-sculpted and renewed in order to present a beautiful 9-hole course, with each hole having two separate tees, to enable an 18 hole game to be played.

Locals and visitors, as well as people studying and staying at Gillyflower, will have access to the course, as well as access to the River Fowey for wet leisure including kayaking and paddle-boarding.

The proposed scheme will also create new, long-term, all year round, employment opportunities for local people.

You can see Sir Tim Smit's presentation video setting out his vision for Gillyflower Farm via the [Lost Voice](#) Facebook Page or download it via this [WeTransfer](#) link.

**We propose that Gillyflower Farm can achieve the objective of becoming a world class leisure and professional learning facility and will become an essential place for horticultural students to visit to gain invaluable experience linked with the already established learning facilities at the Eden Project, The Lost Gardens Of Heligan and the Tresco Abbey Garden on the Isles of Scilly.**





### 3. Lostwithiel and the site.

(Compiled with information obtained from the websites [Lostwithiel.org.uk](http://Lostwithiel.org.uk) and [Cornwall Guide](http://Cornwall Guide).)

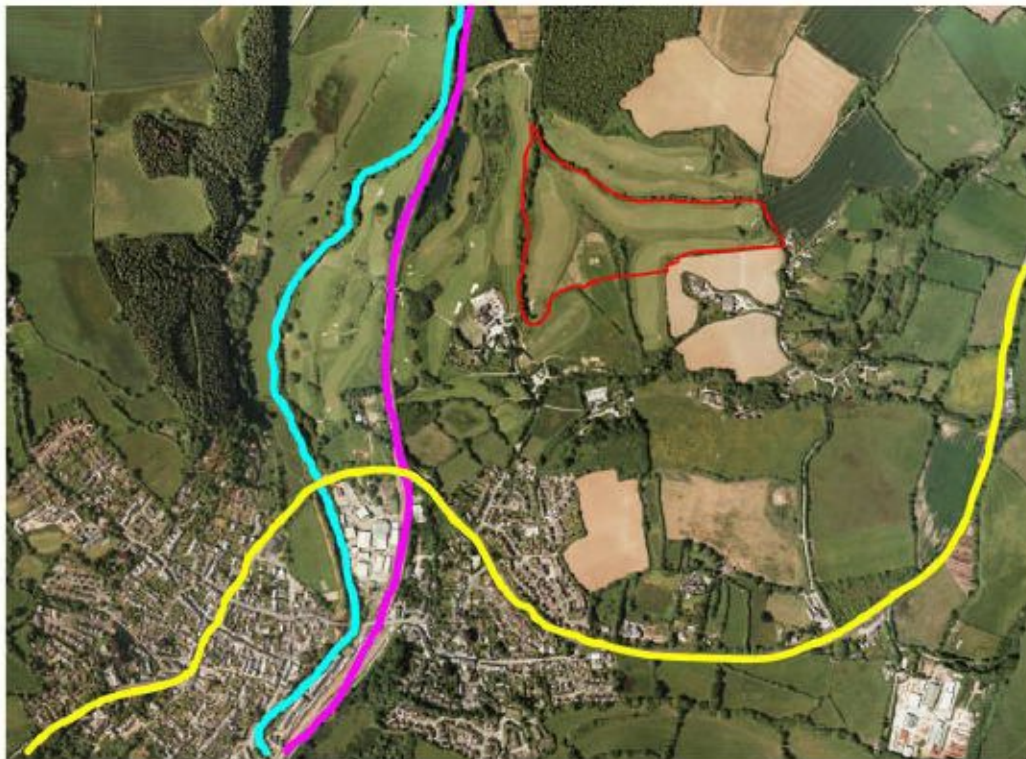
Lostwithiel is situated in a wooded valley at the tidal reach of the River Fowey and dates back to the 12th century.

It is centrally located in Cornwall and is within easy reach of both coasts and the moors. It has good transport links, not only by motor vehicle, but also via the mainline railway line connecting Cornwall to the rest of the UK.

When Lostwithiel was founded by the Normans, the river was wide and deep, and ships tied up along the quay to load tin destined for many European ports. The town became the second busiest port on the south coast of England.

By the 13th century Lostwithiel had become the counties capital and was the administration centre for county affairs and Cornwall's main stannary town.

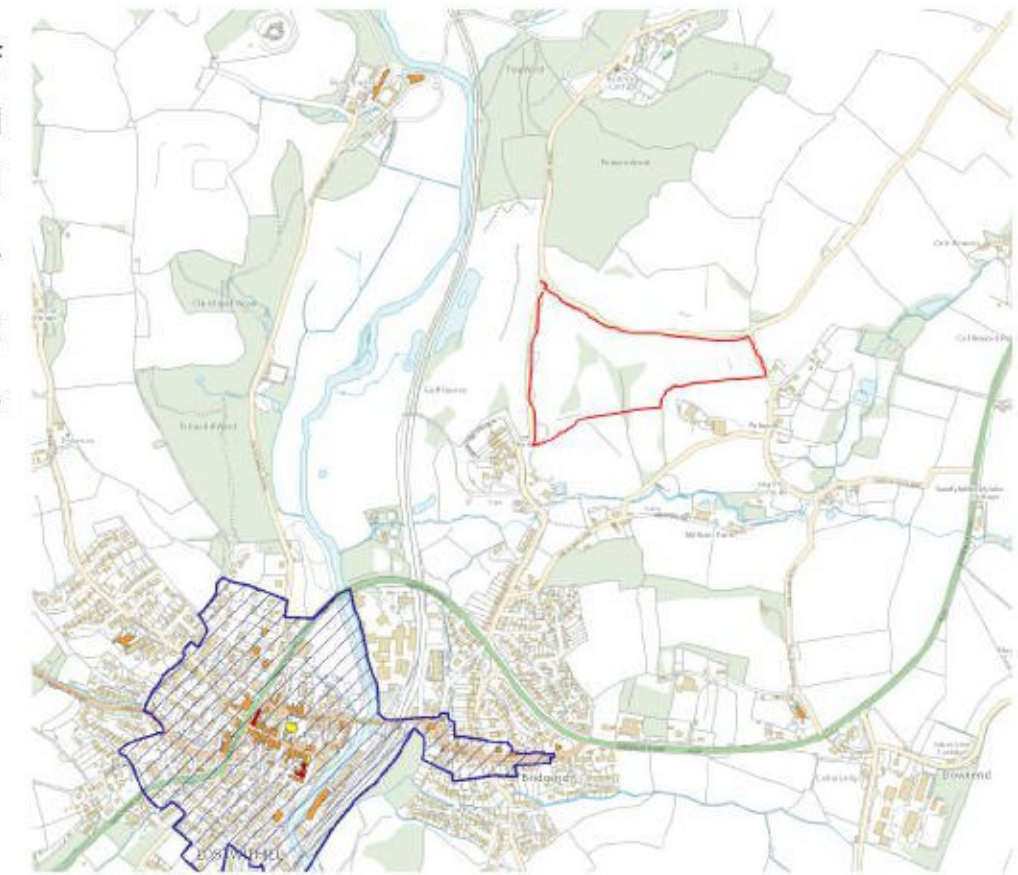
Later, the rubble from the mines on the moors silted up the river, restricting the size of vessel that could use the quay, which subsequently caused the decline of the town.



Left: Aerial view of Lostwithiel showing the A390 in yellow, the train-line in purple, the River Fowey in blue and the application site in red.

Right: Map showing location of the application site in red compared with Lostwithiel conservation area in blue.

Image courtesy of the Cornwall Council interactive map.



Lostwithiel is home to numerous antique shops, as well as a wide range of independent shops providing everything from groceries and convenience goods, to deli foods and gifts.

A mixture of café's, pubs and restaurants offer places to eat and drink, whilst accommodation can also be found via a selection of B&Bs, hotels and pubs, along with a choice of self catering cottage and apartments.

Markets and fairs showcasing antiques, local produce and crafts are a monthly occurrence, with toy fairs, book sales and plant swaps occurring less regularly.

Restormel Castle is a scheduled monument located approximately 1 mile up-river to the north of the centre and conservation area of Lostwithiel. The castle was the home of the Norman lords who built the town and overlooks the river valley. The castle is now part of the Duchy of Cornwall estate.



### 3. Lostwithiel and the site (continued)

The application site is located on the eastern part of the grounds of the former Lostwithiel Golf & Country Club towards the northern edge of the town of Lostwithiel.

Established in 1991, and closing down in 2014, the Lostwithiel Golf & Country Club provided an 18 hole undulating parkland course with an associated clubhouse.



Above: Images of the golf course within the valley of the banks of the River Fowey.

The golf course is bounded to the west by the Cornish mainline railway line and the River Fowey, to the north by Polscoe Woods (with the Duchy of Cornwall Nursery beyond), to the east by farmland (and a small number of rural properties) and to the south by existing residential dwellings along Cott Road (with the A390 and centre of Lostwithiel beyond).



Below: Drone birds eye image of the site taken by Kemp surveyors.

The application site is located at the eastern boundary of the golf course site, between Cott Road and the agricultural land to the east.

The site has no Tree Preservation Orders, is not within the conservation area or within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site and there are no public rights of way or bridle ways across or adjacent to the site.

The Cornwall Council planning map details no previous planning applications associated with the site.



#### 4. Relevant Planning Policies

In order to help inform the design development and the final proposed scheme, we have thoroughly appraised the relevant planning policies and advise that our proposal responds to the policies as follows:

##### **National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (read in conjunction with National Planning Practice Guidance 2014):**

###### Section 2: Achieving sustainable development

- The proposed development will meet the three overarching objectives as follows:
  - **An economic objective:** by expanding an existing business with a sustainable venture that supports local jobs and creates an improved destination for both local people and visitors from further afield - strengthening income streams into the local and district area.
  - **A social objective:** by providing good quality natural open spaces with an improved educational offering to local people. The development also promotes healthy-living and encourages education about organic local food produce.
  - **An environmental objective:** by supporting the extensive planting of new trees and landscape management included within the project, and the sensitive approach to enhancing the local bio-diversity. The proposed buildings are also designed to the most stringent environmental standards through the use of natural building materials and to aim to achieve Net Zero Carbon energy use.

###### Section 6: Building a strong and competitive economy.

- This development will benefit other businesses in the local area through the expansion of an existing tourism and visitor attraction.
- This development will encourage sustainable economic growth, allowing an existing business to grow and provide facilities not previously available in the locality.
- The scheme will respond specifically to Supporting A Prosperous Rural Economy as follows:

- The scheme will provide sustainable growth to an existing business in a rural area through the provision of well-designed new buildings.
- The previous land-based rural business on the site will be developed and diversified through the creation of the new proposal.
- The scheme respects the character of the local countryside through the careful consideration of landscape enhancement and reduction of visual impact to support the proposal as a sustainable rural tourism and leisure development.

- The proposed scheme makes use of previously developed land and is well-related and adjacent to the existing settlement of Lostwithiel. The proposal will meet local business and community needs without unacceptable impact on local roads.

###### Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres

- The proposed scheme represents a small scale rural development (ie the Hub building is less than 2,500 sq m gross internal floor area) and therefore is not subject to a sequential test for a retail and leisure development outside of a town centre.

###### Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities.

- This development will provide opportunities to bring together members of the community in the safe and accessible environs of high quality internal and external spaces.
- All areas of the proposed development are overseen by the proposed buildings and access routes will be well-lit with subtle, low-level lighting to create a safe and accessible environment on site that people can use safely without fear of crime.
- The scheme promotes healthy outdoor lifestyle activities with extensive external areas to be explored through walking and cycling, with pathways linking to the local network of public footpaths.

Continued.

#### 4. Relevant Planning Policies (continued)

##### Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport.

- The proposed scheme will utilise existing transport connections and road access to the site. The expanded use of the site will incorporate improved parking facilities (with generous disabled parking bays), cycle racks and improved signage.
- Opportunities for walking and cycling to the site will be maintained and improved wherever possible with extensive walkways and cycleways proposed through the site and cycle racks adjacent to the main Hub building.
- The scheme includes a proposal to extend the 30mph speed limit on the public highway passing through the site (from Cott Lane to the south) to provide improved highway safety through the site and for neighbouring properties.
- Provision has been made for safe and efficient delivery of goods to the Hub building and access by service and emergency vehicles to all occupied parts of the site.
- The scheme includes safe, accessible and convenient electric / ultra low-emission vehicle plug-in charging points.

##### Section 11: Making effective use of land

- The proposed scheme provides multiple benefits for use of rural land through the proposed mixed use development offering opportunities to achieve net environmental gains through new habitat creation and improved public access to the countryside.

##### Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

- The proposed buildings will function well and add to the overall quality of the area for the lifetime of the development.
- The scheme will be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping.
- The proposed Hub building and associated external spaces will create a strong sense of place and will be a welcoming and distinctive place to visit.
- The overall scheme will be safe, inclusive and accessible, while promoting health and well-being.
- The proposed scheme should be supported as an outstanding and innovative design

which promotes high levels of sustainability.

##### Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

- The proposal will protect and enhance a valued landscape.
- The scheme recognises and strengthens the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- The scheme will minimise impacts on and provide net gains for bio-diversity on the site.
- Measures will be put in place to minimise any additional noise disturbance to neighbouring properties.
- Careful consideration will be given to the specification of external lighting to avoid any additional light pollution.
- Our client is known for his 'green credentials' so low energy and low carbon solutions will be used where ever practical.

##### **Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030:**

##### Policy 1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- This development will remove unnecessary barriers to jobs, business and investment through a positive policy framework with a focus on sustaining a range of local businesses and improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

##### Policy 2: Spatial strategy.

- This development will enhance the cultural and tourist offer in Cornwall and to continue to promote Cornwall as a year-round destination for tourism and recreation, and respect and enhance the quality of place by: 'Ensuring that the design of development is high quality and demonstrates a cultural, physical and aesthetic understanding of its location.'
- It will generate and sustain economic activity by: 'supporting key regeneration activities and the economic vision for Cornwall' and 'supporting the expansion of existing businesses.'

Continued.



#### 4. Relevant Planning Policies (continued)

##### Policy 4: Shopping, services and community facilities.

- This development will support and increase the vitality and viability of Lostwithiel.
- The proposal is consistent with the location and current use of the site.
- The tourist economy is essential to Cornwall and this development will increase revenues, and support the local community by providing good quality employment across a lengthened season.

##### Policy 5: Business and tourism.

- This development will allow people and communities to provide for jobs, locally meeting needs and be of an appropriate scale to its location and to its accessibility.
- It will extend interest in Lostwithiel to create work opportunities which break seasonal labour cycles. It will expand the customer base of existing businesses in the locality.

##### Policy 10: Managing viability.

- This development will enhance and reinforce the local, natural, landscape and historic character and distinctiveness and raise the quality of development through respecting the distinctive character of Cornwall's diverse landscapes and with excellence in design that manages change to maintain the distinctive character and quality of Cornwall.

##### Policy 12: Design.

- This development will ensure Cornwall's enduring distinctiveness and maintain and enhance its distinctive natural and historic character.
- This development will be of an appropriate scale, density, layout, height and mass with a clear understanding and response to its rural setting.
- It will provide continuity with the existing landscape and respect and work with the natural and historic environment.
- It will avoid unreasonable overlooking and unreasonable loss of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impacts as well as unreasonable noise and disturbance.

##### Policy 13: Development standards.

- This development will ensure there is sufficient and convenient space for storage for waste, recycling and compostables, avoiding adverse impacts resulting from noise, dust, waste, etc. and utilising all opportunities for natural lighting and ventilation.

##### Policy 14: Renewable and low carbon energy

- The scheme includes a substantial array of photovoltaic panels that will provide more electrical energy than that consumed by the proposed buildings on the site. These PV panels are located to the rear of the Hub building and will be screened from any views from outside of the site.
- Our client is known for his 'green credentials' so low energy and low carbon solutions will be used wherever practical.

##### Policy 16: Health and wellbeing.

- The scheme promotes healthy outdoor lifestyle activities with extensive external areas to be explored through walking and cycling, with pathways linking to the local network of public footpaths.

##### Policy 23: Natural environment

- The proposals will sustain local character and enhance the natural environment on the site.
- The proposed buildings are dug into rising ground and surrounded by sensitively designed traditional banks.
- The development will be of an appropriate scale, mass and design.

##### Policy 27: Transport and accessibility.

- Please see submitted Transport Report



## 5. Pre-Application Advice

In line with government guidance to enter into discussions with the local authority before a formal application is submitted, a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA - PA20/02443/PREAPP) has been entered into between the Applicant, Architect, the Local Planning Authority and other relevant parties, with the scheme being developed as a result of these discussions:

Since Sir Tim and Alex Smit purchased the golf course site back in 2016, we have been assisting them in developing a new use for the site as well as the associated buildings forms to accompany the use and allow the concept for the reuse and refinement of the site to be progressed and expanded to what is proposed within this planning application.

We originally discussed the possibilities for the site with Cornwall Council at the end of 2016 under PPA reference: PA16/02588/PREAPP.

Extract from original site master plan - prepared for discussion at the initial meeting



### The Current PPA: PA20/02443/PREAPP

A meeting was held on site with the client and Phil Mason (Strategic Director - Economic Growth and Development) and Louise Wood (Service Director - Planning and Sustainable Development) on the 4th September 2020, to discuss the ambitions and objectives of the project, as previously mentioned.

Sir Tim and Alex Smit described their aspirations for the site and associated buildings to the Cornwall Council representatives, who both recognised and acknowledged the potential for the project to greatly benefit the local area and the County of Cornwall more widely.

Prior to the meeting, we had prepared a site masterplan that showed our intentions for the built forms and their distribution on the site - see image left.

Due to the lengthy maturation process of many of the rare fruits and vegetables that are to be grown on the site, the Potager has already been created and the 2,972 trees have already been planted (after an earlier 2 years of ordering, grafting and maturing to a point when they can be planted out during the correct season). As well as these landscape restrictions, there are also various bands of existing trees located on the site.

These landscape elements have informed the intended locations of the proposed buildings to minimise the impact on existing wildlife habitats and trees.

The buildings being proposed for the site include:

- The Hub;
- The Drums accommodation; and
- Owner's/managers house.

Continued.

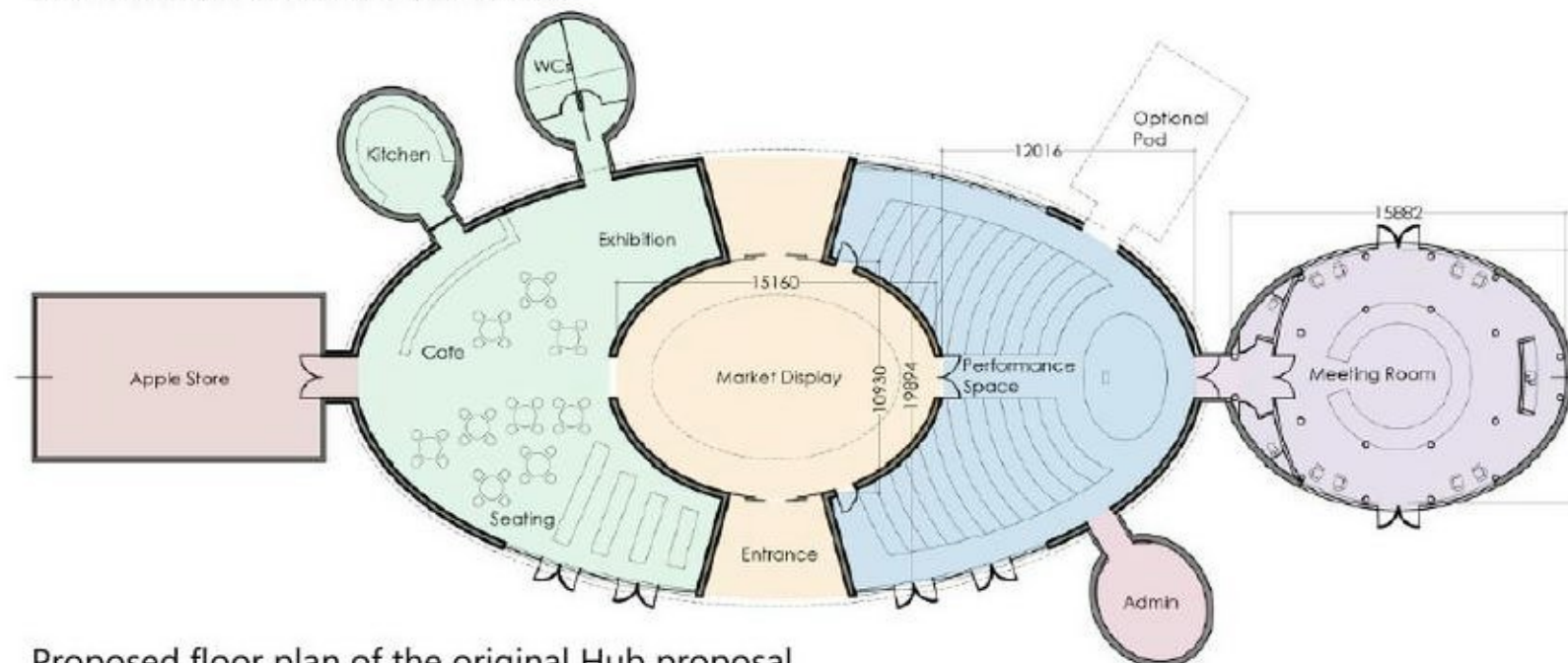


## 5. Pre-Application Advice (continued)

The design concept for the main building, The Hub, showed a low-lying (predominately green roofed) building running along the contours and overlooking the Potager.



Front elevation of the original Hub

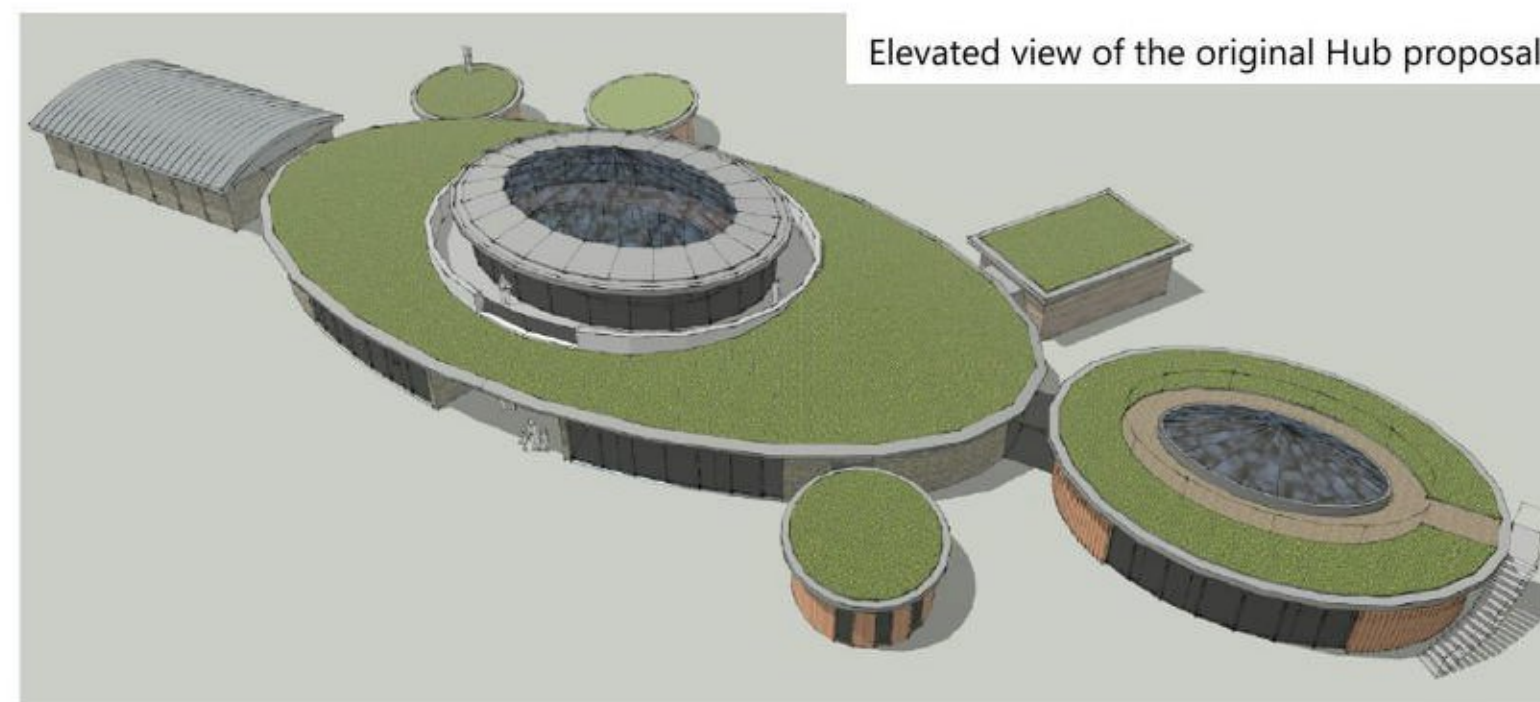


Proposed floor plan of the original Hub proposal



Image of the original Hub proposal

The advice received from the Cornwall Council representatives was although the general design concept was acceptable, they considered the proposed location to be too visible and exposed within the landscape, especially in relation to the views both to and from Restormel Castle. It was suggested that a more suitable position would be to the north of the site with the proposed buildings dug into the surrounding landscape.



It was envisaged that additional future uses would be added to The Hub building through the inclusion of 'pods of production' plugging into the central space. These pods could contain small scale 'factory' spaces utilising the produce and crops grown on the site (such as micro brewery, distillery, cider and fruit press, and even a cookery school and tasting kitchen).

We were advised to include all future 'pods of production' as part of the submitted scheme. This would allow their construction to be phased over time.

Sir Tim and Alex Smit confirmed they were happy to proceed with the design development of The Hub on the basis of the conversations with the Cornwall Council representatives, but confirmed their desire to create a beautiful and sustainable building that overlooked the Potager garden and was not just an apologetic building buried into the hillside.

All parties agreed that the creation of beautiful, sustainable architecture should be the aim for The Hub and other buildings on the site.

Model of Drum Accommodation



Continued.



## 5. Pre-Application Advice (continued)



Model of Drum Accommodation

The proposed Drum accommodation buildings were also discussed at the site meeting with the Cornwall Council representatives.

The external materials for The Drums were discussed and agreed by all parties to be green roofs, metal roofs and timber cladding to match the natural palette of materials proposed for The Hub building.

The number and location of The Drums was discussed at the meeting. A balance needed to be found between providing a sufficient number of buildings on site to provide overnight accommodation for visitors, and creating an attractive collection of sustainable buildings within an enhanced natural landscape setting.

All parties agreed that The Drums would sit well dispersed within the areas either side of the existing tree lines through the site and that 20 no. Drums could be successfully included without risking overdevelopment.

The suggested number of Drums would provide financial support to the aims of the overall project, which would not be feasible without them.



Sketch elevation of Owner's House

The design of the Owner's House aligns with the design concept of low-lying curved buildings used throughout the other building designs on the site. It will also utilise a palette of natural materials similar to those proposed for The Hub building and The Drums.

Other pertinent points raised during the meeting included:

1. Ensuring that the correct consultants were appointed and reports prepared, including:
  - Heritage consultant;
  - Ecologist;
  - Arboriculturalist;
  - Landscape specialists;
  - Transport consultant;
  - Drainage & infrastructure specialist.
2. Ensure that the local community is engaged and consulted (all parties understood that this may be affected by current Covid-19 / social distancing guidelines).

The feedback offered by the Cornwall Council representatives at the site meeting was generally supportive and constructive, recognising that the commitment already shown to the project was admirable. They suggested that although the project would be a departure from the local plan and policies, a development and venture of this type should be supported by Cornwall Council, providing the various hurdles associated with access to the site and visual impact on the castle could be overcome.

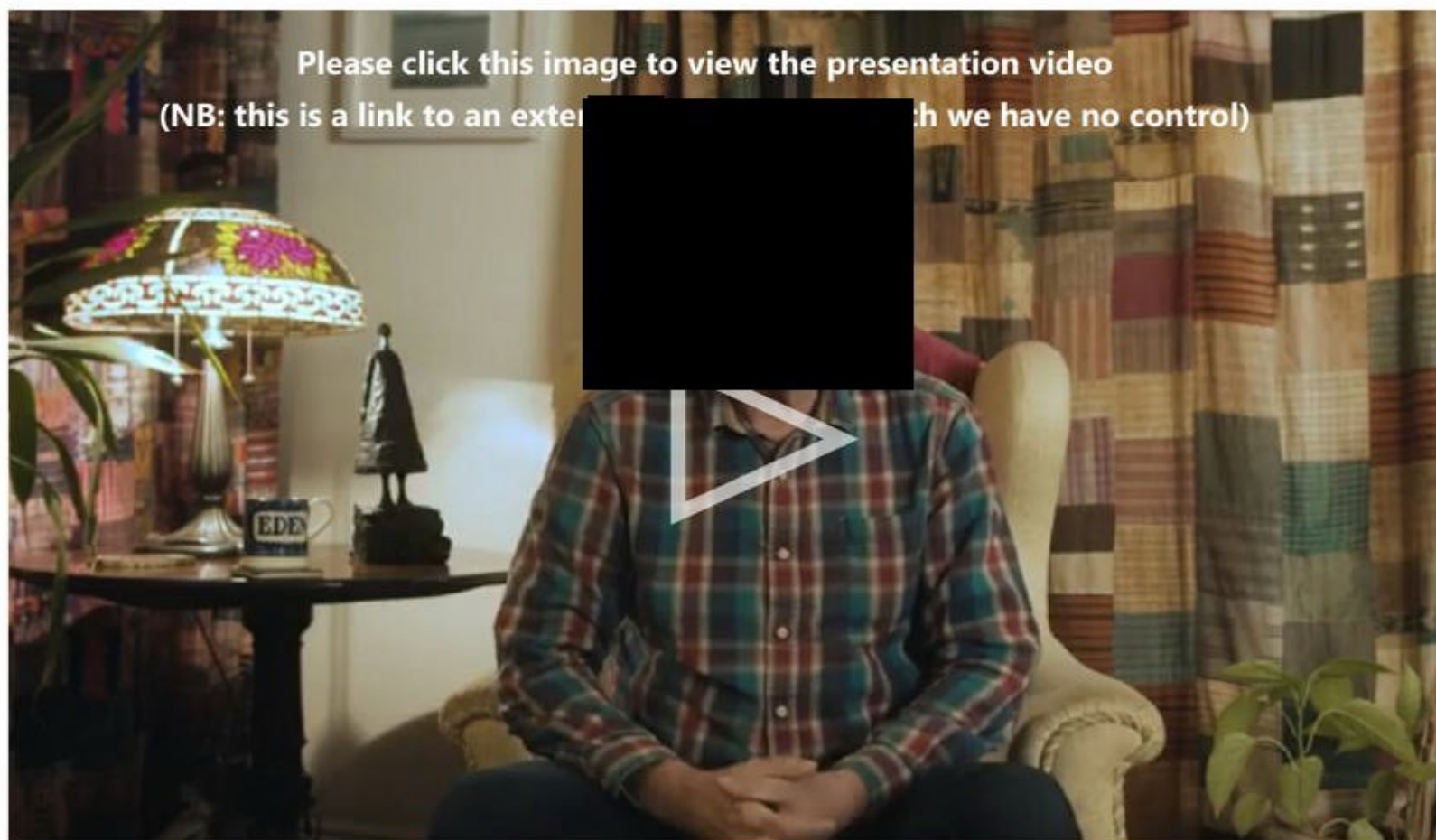
**We have prepared and submitted the scheme (which is the subject of the current planning application) on the basis of the advice received from Cornwall Country Council during this meeting under the Planning Performance Agreement reference: PA20/02443/PREAPP.**



## 6. Community Consultation and Engagement

Usually local community consultation would be undertaken in connection with a significant scheme such as Gillyflower Farm through local presentations; meetings; Q&A's; drop-in sessions and site walkovers.

However, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 prevented many of these options being available and therefore alternative means of engaging with the local community have been considered.



To this end, where socially distanced small scale meetings have not been able to occur, Sir Tim Smit has prepared an informative presentation video outlining the Gillyflower Farm scheme that is the subject of this planning application.

This presentation video was uploaded to the Lostwithiel 'Lost Voice' Facebook page on Wednesday 16th December 2020.

The 'Lost Voice' Facebook page is a public group and promotes itself as the 'Community Notice Board & Discussion Group for the Lostwithiel Area'. At the time of writing this Facebook page has nearly 2,000 members.

The 'Lost Voice' Facebook page is also linked with another Lostwithiel community Facebook page called @lovelostwithiel. This page has almost 4,000 members.

The [2011 Census](#) included a residential population of 2,814 for Lostwithiel. Although, it cannot be assumed that all of Lostwithiel's residents will have access to these Facebook pages, we would suggest that a large number will and we therefore consider uploading the presentation video to these Facebook pages to be an appropriate method of engaging with and consulting the local community.

At the time of writing this statement, the presentation video has been viewed in excess of 4,500 times, and has also been shared from its original uploaded location a further 30+ times.

We understand that a link to the video has also been shared from the Facebook pages of the Mayor of Lostwithiel and Cornwall Live (a local news organisation with over 201,000 followers).

We have submitted a 'Local Community Consultation Feedback' document with the planning application which sets out the comments received via these various platforms, and those sent directly to Sir Tim Smit as a result of the video.

The 'Local Community Consultation Feedback' also records Sir Tim and Alex Smit's consultations with the Mayor, Ward Councillor and residents of Cott Road.

**Overwhelmingly, the feedback received indicates strong local support for the Gillyflower Farm scheme.**



## 7. Design Statement

### Introduction

As stated in previous sections, the scheme that is the subject of this planning application has been prepared following discussions with Cornwall County Council's planning department as part of a Planning Performance Agreement.

The proposed designs have been developed in conjunction with advice received from the Heritage Consultant, Landscape Specialist, Ecologist, Arboriculturalist and Transport Consultant, and in accordance with [Cornwall Council Draft Design Guide](#).

As the application includes a selection of buildings, an holistic design approach has been incorporated throughout the design development.

We have endeavoured to create a collection of buildings that are exciting and organic in form, but also respectful and appropriate to their rural location.

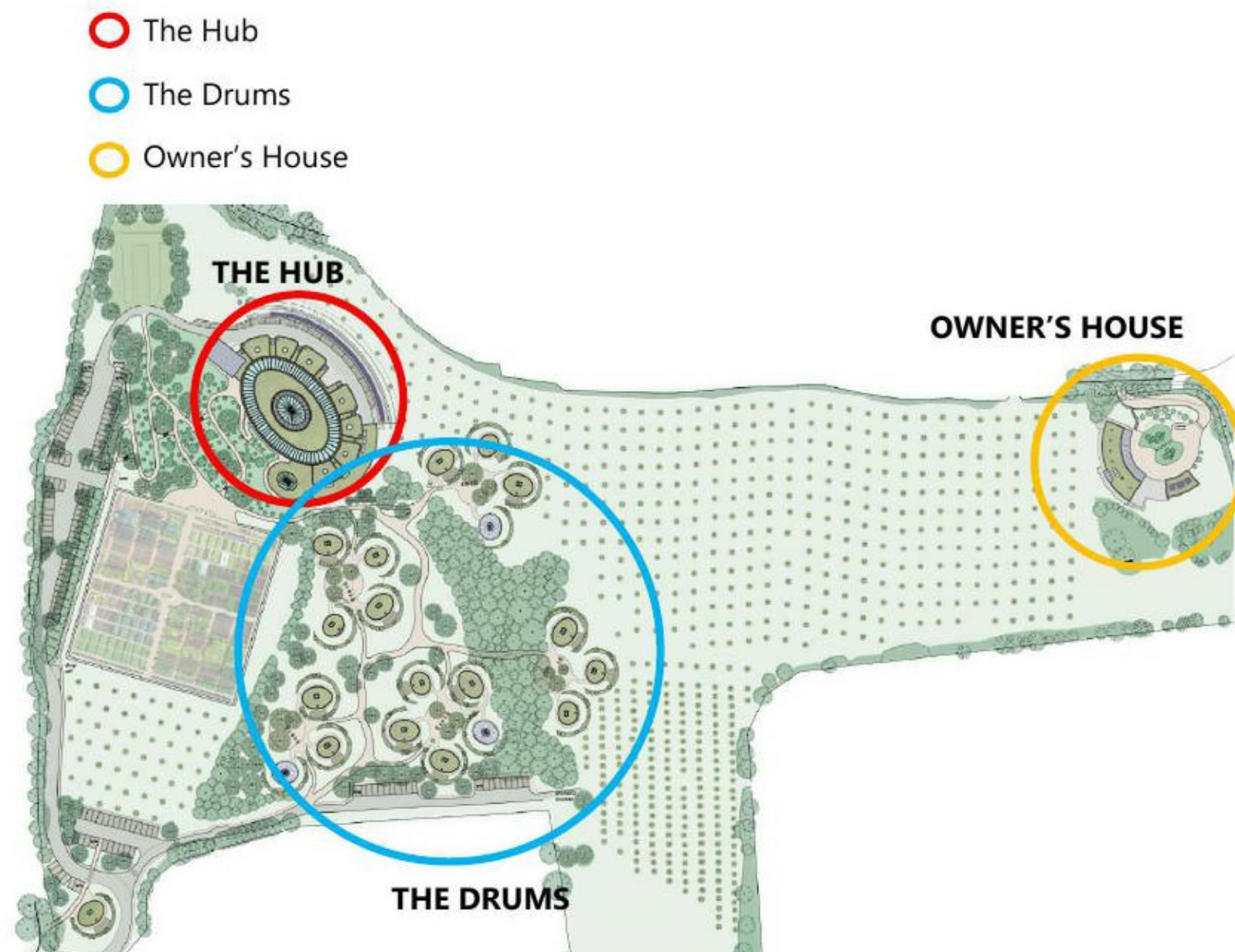
The designs have also been considered in terms of the approach and journey that will be undertaken by visitors and guests, when using the various buildings, as well as the relationship between the buildings and the external spaces created.

The five main design objectives that have been considered throughout the design development process, include:

1. **LOCATION:** The proposed scheme should be sensitively designed and appropriately placed for the gently sloping location and rural views into and out of the site.
2. **APPEARANCE:** The proposed scheme should contain a subtle organic aesthetic reinforcing a sense of place.
3. **EFFICIENCY:** The proposed scheme should be efficient in form, space and use, but also feel generous and practical.
4. **NATURAL HABITAT:** The proposed scheme should minimise the impact on the landscape with existing trees, hedgerows, and habitats maintained.

5. **LIFESTYLE:** The proposed scheme should create welcoming external spaces that link to local surroundings and promote healthy lifestyles.

These criteria were considered throughout the design process and have resulted in the proposed buildings being located within three distinct areas as follows:



The design criteria was applied to the buildings in each of these three areas, with the building forms being different in scale and execution as a result of the individual briefs and location for each building.

Continued.