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RP189 - Conversion of Existing Former Water Storage Building to Residential Dwelling

Kerley Hill, Chacewater, Cornwall. TR4 8LQ

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**Design & Access Statement r00
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February 2021



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Background

The design and access statement is written following the principles of “Design and Access Statements” CABE 2006 and is organised with regard to the Cornwall Chief Planning Officer’s Advice Note: Good Design in Cornwall.

Note that the following is laid out as per the “Good Design in Cornwall” Advice Note, repeating each of the questions and paragraphs prior to its associated answer

Reference should also be made to the Planning Statement prepared by Business Location Services which has the same title as this document

1. Introduction

This application for Planning Approval follows the refusal of the previous applications, PA17/11928, and subsequent appeal, PA18/09542, which concluded that the design did not comply with Policy 7 of the Local Plan, on this World Heritage Site. Indeed, the associated Planning Statement states the reason for refusal as, paraphrased, “...including the new build and associated domestic curtilage, would result in harm to the rural and historic character of a surrounding area ...within the designated World Heritage Site.” However, it is noticeable that the Planning Department also stated in a report relating to the application that there were no applications for the conversion of similar redundant “Water Storage Tanks” into dwellings, which could be used as precedents, when, not many miles away, at Perranwell Station there was. This project, which is currently under construction, was the subject of Planning Application PA17/04963, deposited in May of 2017 and approved in July of 2017 some 6 months prior to the deposit of the refusal of PA17/11928.

However, it must be said that the approved project, at Perranwell Station, respects the existing structure by not adding external extensions that hide the original structural form. Whilst the refused application has great merit the following images illustrate the difference between it and the existing approved scheme.



A) PA17/11928 (refused)



B) PA17/04963 (approved)

This statement and accompanying drawings will show that this application exhibits the necessary respect to the original structural form and its heritage, which the Structural Report shows it to be entirely suitable for conversion.

Good Design Guide: Integrating into the neighbourhood

2. Does the proposal suit its context?

Good Design Guide: We expect development to demonstrate a clear understanding of how it responds positively to the site and surroundings.

Beyond the explanation already made in the “Introduction”, the existing concrete water tank exists on the periphery of an agricultural area, with the closest dwellings being the Farmhouse a couple of fields away to the South. That being said the redundancy of the tank lends itself to being preserved and surely the best, and most economic, way of doing this is to convert it to a dwelling. Since, the tank has no architectural merit or historic validity, being a solid engineering structure, there is no style to match. This would suggest that the best way forward would be to use a contemporary solution with as many ‘green’ principals as possible whilst using a sympathetic mix of materials, see Section 5. This is what has been done and is illustrated by the drawings showing the ‘as proposed’ design, which illustrate a sympathetic, yet contemporary, design to suit its context.



Fig. 1 – View North West of site from the Bissoe road. (Courtesy of Google Maps)

In terms of the impact of the converted building on the surroundings to the site, its scale and position having not changed or been added to, with the exception of an escape stair and a porch roof will not have changed.

3. Does the proposal connect people, places and wildlife and encourage healthy lifestyles?

Good Design Guide: We expect development to create and exploit opportunities to make connections to nearby shops, services, green space and countryside by providing safe and legible footpaths, cycle routes and green corridors. For larger proposals multifunctional and intergenerational spaces for people to meet should be included.

The site is already connected with the countryside, being part of it. In regard to existing amenities, these are abundant since access via the considerable network of existing roads and paths mean that the site is in no way isolated. Close by are bus routes, the villages of Chacewater, Carnon Downs and the City of Truro.

4. Does the proposal consider the people who will live in, work in and use the development in the future?

Good Design Guide: People spend around 90% of their time indoors, with 65% of this spent at home. Design of new places and buildings should aim to create healthier environments. How developments are managed and maintained is critical to their long-term success. We believe that allowing the community to have the option to oversee or manage communal space often leads to better outcomes. At a smaller scale, buildings need maintenance to remain in good condition. Buildings should not require excessive maintenance to keep them sound and healthy; choosing long lasting materials is recommended.

The proposal is designed to a standard that far exceeds the long abandoned Parker Morris standards such that the total floor area, being over 359 M² is more than suitable for the designed occupancy levels such that all the living spaces meet the comfort criteria together with the provision of adequate storage area.

The proposed construction materials, whilst explained further in Section 5, should be easily maintained by the future owner/occupants being as they are a combination of common building materials and finishes together with newer contemporary “green” materials.

Good Design Guide: Creating a Place

5. Does the proposal have a sense of place and would it add to local distinctiveness?

Good Design Guide: We believe new development should have a distinctive character and should not perpetuate low quality design. Materials choice is often important to this, for example, natural local materials such as granite, quarried stone or slate on pitched roofs are locally distinctive. The innovative use of materials can be inspiring.

As already discussed, in the previous sections, for aesthetic reasons there is no ready style that should be used for the conversion of the existing Engineered structure to a dwelling and therefore it would seem that the most sensible, sustaining, and suitable solution would be to use a clean contemporary design that at the same time can emphasise the geometry of the existing. For a complete listing of the proposed materials see the proposed material schedule shown below, Fig. 2 and illustrated in Fig. 3.

Materials:	Existing	Proposed
Roof	Pre-Cast Concrete, Weathered	Domed Fireproof Butyl Rubber with domed Clear Glass Skylight with Dark Bronze mullions
Walls	Pre-Cast Concrete, Weathered	Ground to First Floor: White painted render, First Floor to Eaves: Millboard Envello "Shadow Line Cladding" in Golden Oak
Doors & Windows	N/A	Dark Bronze frames and Mullions with Clear Glass (Shown Blue) and Obscure (Shown White)

Fig. 2 – External Material Proposals



Fig. 3 Design Rendering from drawing C645 – 18 Fig.2

The 'sense of place' is already created by the site itself, the proposal being sympathetic to this with minimal disruption other than a clean styling.

6. Street and home

Good Design Guide: Are there usable and appropriate frontages and boundaries or hedges?

We recommend, in most circumstances, that an enclosed or well defined private space to the front of properties is provided. This can help to foster day to day interactions, a sense of ownership and natural surveillance. Enough space for landscaping is recommended. More generally, boundary treatments facing onto roads, footpaths and public space should be walls and railings or, where possible, particularly in rural areas, Cornish hedges and native planting (with space for roots etc). Wooden panel fencing should be avoided where they face onto public highways, footpaths, and spaces.

Currently the site is hedged or tree lined on all its boundaries and with an existing vehicular access way, nothing that is proposed will change this other than perhaps the subsequent development of the amenity (garden) area by future residents. As stated later, in Section 9, the hedges which currently provide a 'defensible space' may well be improved and given a more domestic feel rather than the current 'wild' state.

7. Is the street a good quality design with integrated parking?

Good Design Guide: Creating safe and attractive environments that can be shared by people and slow moving traffic make new developments feel more pleasant places to be. Parking on streets and roads can work best when using landscaping (street trees) and designated parking bays for residents and visitors, perhaps with informal places to sit /meet as design features for pedestrian friendly environments. Surfacing should be permeable to reduce flood risk.

The development site has excellent off-road access, making it quite recessive, and is designed with excellent vehicular and pedestrian access ways which will have little impact on the rural street feel of the area. Whilst it would be contrary to "Policy 7" to include a garage as part of the building design several car parking spaces are allowed for within the driveway. See drawing sheet C645 – 10.

8. Can you see the drainage systems above the ground as surface features?

Good Design Guide: We recommend that drainage should be included as part of the whole scheme design and mimic nature to manage surface water. They can include wales (shallow ditches) and pools which create a valued greener feel and appearance, to a development incorporating innovative sewage solutions and preventing flood risk when part of open space and landscaping. Drainage features should not normally be hidden below ground but instead form surface features.

This is not a consideration for this site since the natural ground drainage is more than adequate. Further all surface water collected from the roofs will go to soakaways in the surrounding area of the garden or to Water Butts. Future

9. Does the proposal include energy efficient features or energy generation?

Good Design Guide: We recommend that managing energy demand, encouraging energy generation and water efficiency should be design considerations from the outset, rather than bolt on solutions. This might not reflect a traditional building's character but is a crucial element of future character, durability and sustainability. It is recognised that in the case of Listed Buildings and those in Conservation Areas and other designations, limitations may apply to alterations and additions.

It is not proposed to include Solar Panels within the application; however, these might well be a consideration for a future owner/occupier who could well have them fitted to the south and south west facing areas of the roof. In relation to energy saving features low energy fittings will be used where appropriate to minimise energy usage and the levels of insulation and thermal performance shall be as required by or be more than the requirements of Building Regulations. An electrically powered car battery 'charge point' is proposed and is indicated on drawing C645 -15

10. Is the proposal wildlife friendly and does it safeguard and provide trees?

Good Design Guide: Landscaping, open spaces and gardens offer huge potential and are a much needed resource for people and wildlife. They should incorporate existing trees and hedges. New developments are strongly encouraged to include as many of the following features as possible: new bat boxes, bird boxes or bee bricks, badger or hedgehog friendly fences, green walls and roofs, wildlife friendly kerbside guttering, ponds, good quality topsoil, native plants, and trees.

Since the site is already framed by existing trees and hedges, as stated in Section 6, with a mostly grass covered surface surrounding the tank it is already wildlife friendly and nothing proposed will alter this. The tree lined SW and NW boundary trees are to be retained, as are the hedges to the road on the NE boundary and the adjoining field on SE. Some improvements to the Landscaping are envisaged within the site boundaries and on the inner side of the perimeters which may add to the current tree count and enhance the natural feel of the site.

11. Does the proposal have usable gardens?

Good Design Guide: We believe gardens are important for the quality of our lives. We therefore discourage 'postage stamp' sized plots / gardens, but strongly encourage spaces large enough for drying washing, wildlife friendly planting and safe areas of play for children and, where practical, the growing of vegetables. A rule of thumb for private outdoor amenity space (communal if serving apartments) is that, as a minimum, this should equal or preferably exceed the footprint of the building it serves. However, all gardens should be appropriate to their context which in most instances will equate to a requirement for gardens sizes larger than this.

The garden amenity area, which surrounds the proposed conversion, has an area of over 1470 M² which is considerable and by its nature will provide privacy and sunshine. This area is therefore well over that required by the

planning standards. The drawing sheet set indicates pathways, patios and clothes drying areas being accessed from the both the Ground and First Floors of the dwellings. The remaining, considerable area, will make a beautiful garden area with enough space for enjoyment, play and beauty whilst retaining the natural feel of the area.

12. Is there adequate external storage for bins, recycling, cycles and other lifestyle equipment?

Good Design Guide: We expect all homes to include a covered bin store and secure convenient storage within the house and / or plot design for cycles and other lifestyle equipment.

A Bin store enclosure, capable of accommodating 2 wheelie bins (1 Refuse, 1 Recycling), is provided for the new dwelling and is indicated on drawing sheet C645 – 11 and shown on many others, being located on the perimeter access pathway under the access and emergency exit stair on the East side of the dwelling. Should more storage for lifestyle equipment be required, which cannot be accommodated internally, the garden amenity is more than large enough to place a garden shed, should one be desired.

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February 2021