

Planning, Design and Access Statement
Tregoon Farm, Gweek

Construction of Two Dwellings as Alternative to Class Q Development,
Improvements to Approved Conversion of the Blockwork Barn and
Conversion of Stone Barn to Dwelling



A report by Enhance Land & Planning

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The information, opinion and advice contained in this document has been prepared and provided in accordance with the RTPI's Code of Professional Conduct.





Summary

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of two dwellings as an alternative to a Class Q conversion, improvements to the approved conversion of the blockwork barn, and the conversion of the stone barn to a single dwelling. Two of the barns have recently been established as suitable for conversion under Class Q (PA21/02190) to provide 3 dwellings.

The proposal comprises three main elements – the demolition of the large, unattractive barns and outbuildings to reduce the footprint of built development on the site; the re-siting of two of the dwellings approved under Class Q to make better use of the site and enhance the appearance of the development; and the conversions of the two remaining barns (one of which already has permission under Class Q) to dwellings. The total number of dwellings on the site would be four, three of which already have permission in principle.

The remaining barn which does not yet have permission for conversion is of a traditional appearance, constructed of stone with a slate roof, and it is proposed to retain this and convert to a three-bedroom dwelling.

The development would represent a significant enhancement to the site, which is currently rundown and underused. Whilst there is an option to convert two of buildings under Class Q of the Permitted Development Order (confirmed by PA21/02190) to form three dwellings, the proposed scheme would offer a significant enhancement to the site over what has already been approved. It is established in case law that permitted development rights can legitimately represent a fallback position when considering alternative proposals for development at the same site.

The proposed development complies with Policies 1, 2, 7, 21 and 23 of the Cornwall Local Plan. The development should therefore be approved in line with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.





Site Location and Description

The site currently comprises a group of five agricultural buildings located to the south of the dwelling known as Tregoon Farm. The buildings comprise an attractive two storey stone barn with a slate roof (Barn C), two blockwork outbuildings (Barn B and Barn E), and two large timber clad and blockwork barns (Barn A and Barn D), along with a blockwork silage clamp.



The site lies within an attractive rural setting, within easy access of the village of Gweek which lies approximately 200m to the south east. It is surrounded on three sides by fields, and to the north by the bungalow known as Tregoon Farm. The site is well contained in a dip in the landscape, and is not visible from outside of the site due to the intervening topography and well-established vegetation.

The site is not covered by any ecological or heritage designations, but it does lie within an Area of Great Landscape Value.

The applicant seeks to provide significant enhancements to Tregoon Farm, both in terms of biodiversity and social benefits – *“Although not part of the same development as the old barns at Tregoon farm, I have several plans for the farm. I plan to create 3 new traditional orchards with underlying, flower rich lowland meadows. This will be a newly created priority habitat, bordering the public footpaths and a great asset to the local area. I also plan to start working with local schools to offer the farm as a setting for class visits to get local children into the countryside and learn about the links between food and nature friendly farming. This will be on top of the existing practices of*



nectar rich grass fields, herbal leys and large wild bird seed plots". Whilst these are not part of this application, the applicant is committed to improving the farm and providing benefits to the local community through visual enhancements and education provision.

Planning History

The following planning history is relevant to this application.

PA17/01736/PREAPP – Pre-application advice for residential development of up to 3-4 dwellings. Positive pre-application advice received 4th September 2017.

PA21/02190 – Class Q application for conversion of barns to form 3 dwellings – Prior approval not required. This relates to Barn B (single dwelling) and Barn D (two dwellings)

Although relating to a different site, the principle of such development is demonstrated as acceptable by PA19/04492, for the demolition of building and construction of 5no Dwellings at St Breock Downs Farm, Wadebridge. Here, a large former agricultural building, also in an AGLV, was proposed for demolition after establishing that 5 dwellings could be provided via conversion as a fallback position, and instead using the site to provide 5 “replacement” dwellings as a farmstead style development. This was approved in May 2020, and the Case Officer stated *“it is considered that the scheme presented in this application is reflective of the Cornish vernacular and traditional farm buildings and therefore it is pinioned that the proposal will create an enhancement to the landscape through the demolition of the large redundant building and its replacement with five well designed local vernacular rural buildings”*.

Planning Policy

Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030

The Cornwall Local Plan was formally adopted on 22nd November 2016, and forms the development plan for the application.

Policy 1 relates to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and identifies that development which is sustainable should be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy 2 sets out the spatial strategy for Cornwall, and seeks development to respect and enhance the quality of place.

The development would represent a significant enhancement to the appearance of the site, through the demolition of the large, unattractive barns (Barn A, Barn D and Barn E), which have a total footprint of 951sqm. Dwellings 3 and 4 are conversions of Barn C and Barn B respectively, and would have footprints of 80sqm and 89sqm. The proposed replacement dwellings, garages and conversions would have a combined footprint of 551sqm, meaning the total footprint of development on the site is reduced by 400sqm.

The proposed replacement dwellings (Dwellings 1 and 2) would be re-sited to allow a better use of the site's layout, with Dwelling 2 being set within the void created by the former slurry pit, such that it would be almost entirely screened from view.



Policy 2a sets out key targets, and seeks to provide a minimum of 52,500 homes at an average rate of about 2,625 per year to 2030, to help deliver sufficient new housing of appropriate types to meet future requirements.

The proposal would deliver 2 dwellings as an alternative to the Class Q fallback position (approved under Class Q in Barn D), improvements to the conversion approved under Class Q in Barn B, and the conversion of an attractive stone barn (Barn C) to form a single dwelling. As such, there is a net gain of 1 dwelling but 4 dwellings will be delivered in total, contributing to the key targets set out in Policy 2a.

Policy 7 relates to housing in the countryside, and supports replacement dwellings broadly comparable to the size, scale and bulk of the dwelling being replaced and of an appropriate scale and character to their location, and the reuse of suitably constructed redundant, disused or historic buildings that are considered appropriate to retain and would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting. The building to be converted should have an existing lawful residential or non-residential use and be ten years old or greater.

The application is being submitted with a Class Q fallback position for the conversion of two of the existing buildings to form 3 dwellings, and it is proposed to replace and relocate two of these (Dwellings 1 and 2), to more logical locations within the site. The remaining replacement dwelling (Dwelling 4) would still be a conversion proposal (Barn B), but the appearance and function would be significantly improved over the Class Q fallback. The remaining conversion (Dwelling 3) would utilise the attractive stone barn (Barn C), which is considered appropriate to retain due to its traditional character and use of high-quality, locally prevalent materials such as slate and stone. The demolition of the two large barns would lead to a clear enhancement of the immediate setting.

Cornwall Council's Guidance Note on Class Q development sets out that "It is acknowledged that, in certain cases, an application for planning permission may result in a better scheme in terms of building design and amenity provision than Class Q criteria would allow. In such circumstances, the Council may view a previous approval under Class Q as a material planning consideration/fallback position when considering a subsequent planning/pre-application to change the use of an agricultural building to a dwelling with alterations and extensions or complete rebuilds, although the weight to be given will depend on the circumstances in each case. For the avoidance of doubt, the argument that an approval under Class Q would have been given will not suffice" (April 2021).

Policy 12 deals with design issues and sets out the Council's commitment to achieving a high quality safe, sustainable and inclusive design in all developments, and sets out the criteria against which development should be assessed, including character, layout and movement.

The proposed development represents a far higher quality of design over the established Class Q fallback, and the demolition of the unattractive barns would allow for a more attractive and logical layout.

Policy 13 relates to development standards and seeks good practice in terms of the relationship of the development with its surroundings.

The proposed development would offer a clear enhancement to its immediate setting over that of the Class Q fallback position, including the removal of 951sqm of underused, unattractive barns



and the provision of an attractive farmstead style development which utilises two existing buildings and makes effective and innovative use of the void formed by the former slurry pit to further enhance the site's appearance within the designated landscape.

Policy 21 seeks to reuse previously developed land and buildings, and increase building density where appropriate, taking into account the character of the surrounding area and access to services and facilities to ensure an efficient use of land.

The proposed development would ensure an efficient use of land through removing the large, underused buildings and providing instead a high-quality development which makes best use of the land and buildings available to provide 4 dwellings.

Policy 23 relates to the natural environment and requires development proposals to sustain local distinctiveness and character and protect and where possible enhance the natural environment.

The development would significantly enhance the appearance of the site though removing the large, underused barns and reconfiguring the layout of two of the replacement dwellings to make better use of the space available. The high-quality design of the replacement dwellings would improve the standard of development over that of the established fallback position, and provide an attractive farmstead style development.

Policy 27 relates to transport and accessibility and sets out that all developments should provide safe and suitable access to the site for all people and not cause a significantly adverse impact on the local or strategic road network that cannot be managed or mitigated.

The proposed development would utilise the existing access to the site. Given the established fallback position for three dwellings, there would be a net gain of a single additional dwelling over the current situation, which would not give rise to an adverse impact on the local or strategic road network. In addition, there is a public footpath to the east of the site which provides an off-road pedestrian link to Gweek, meaning residents would not be reliant on private motor vehicles to access the facilities and services required for day-to-day living.

National Planning Policy Framework

The following paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 are relevant:

- ☒ Paragraph 11 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- ☒ Paragraph 79 – Housing in the countryside. This supports development that would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.
- ☒ Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- ☒ Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- ☒ Paragraph 170 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Design

The design of the proposed replacement dwellings has been carefully considered to ensure the development is sensitive to the character of the area. The materials used would relate well to the character of the area, incorporating natural slate, stonework, timber and render. The stone barn would be retained and converted, with the existing materials preserved and enhanced, and the remaining blockwork barn with extant permission for conversion under Class Q would be visually enhanced through the use of more appropriate materials.



Amount

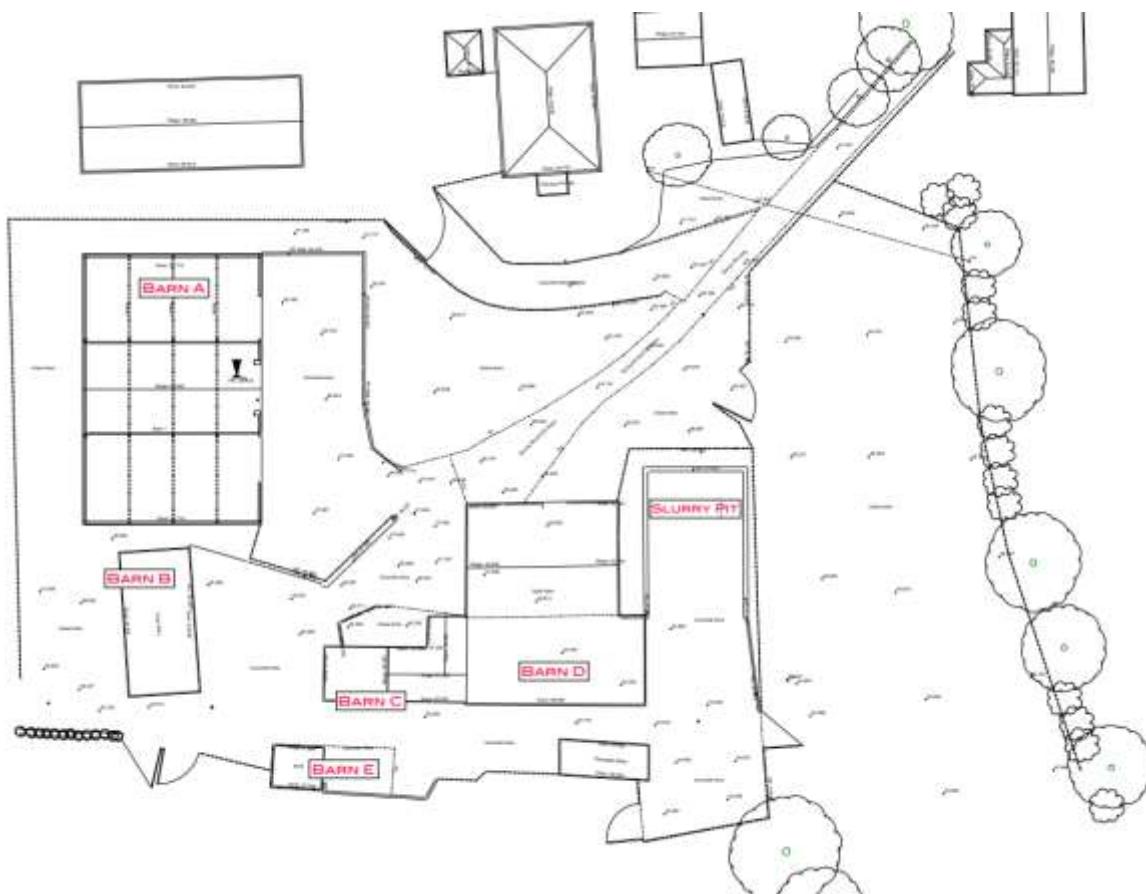
It is considered that 4 dwellings would be appropriate for the site, given the Class Q fallback position for three dwellings. The existing footprint of development on the site is 1,147.5sqm, and the combined footprints of the proposed scheme would comprise 551sqm – a significant reduction in the amount of built development. This is considered an important benefit of the proposal, as reducing the amount of built form on site will offer both environmental and visual enhancements.

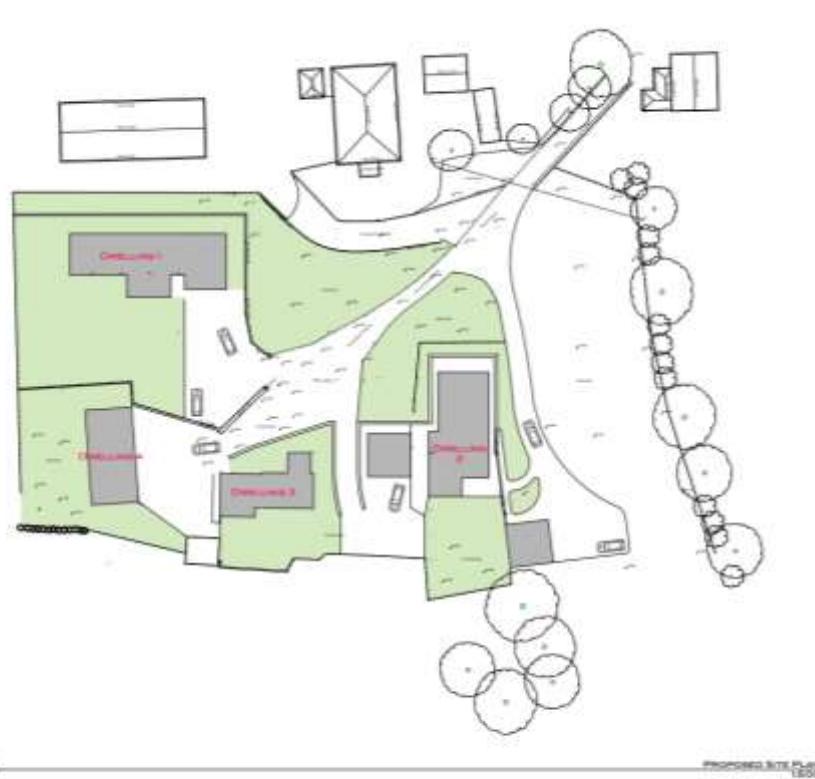
Layout

The submitted site plan shows how the replacement dwellings would be located within the site. The figures below show the existing site (above) and the proposed layout (below).

The plans show that two buildings will be retained and converted (Barns C and B to form Dwelling 3 and Dwelling 4), with Barn B already having permission for residential use under Class Q. Barn D has permission for two dwellings under Class Q, and it is instead proposed to demolish this and the large barn to the north western section of the site, to allow for the siting of one of the replacement dwellings (Dwelling 1). The remaining replacement dwelling (Dwelling 2) would be sited in the former silage clamp to make best use of the change in levels.

The layout has been carefully considered and seeks to avoid any adverse impacts on the character of the surrounding area, and would offer a significant visual enhancement to the site – an important benefit given the AGLV designation.





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Proposed New Dwellings and Conversions at Tregoon Farm, Gweek, Peters, TR12 1AB

Mr D Gates

Proposed Site Plan
1575A/16

cabe

Scale

The scale of built form on site would reduce significantly as a result of the proposal. The existing footprint of built development on site is 1,147.5sqm, and the existing buildings are predominantly two storeys in height to allow for machinery access and storage. The proposed development would result in a total built footprint of 551sqm, with 169sqm of this total comprising conversions (Dwellings 3 and 4). A further 140sqm (Dwelling 2) would utilise the void of the former silage clamp, utilising space which would not otherwise have a useful purpose. Given the existing scale of built form on site, the proposed reduction would offer a clear improvement.

Landscaping

The existing hardstanding, other than that retained for the access drive, would be replaced with lawn and outdoor amenity space for the dwellings.

Access

The proposed development would utilise the existing access for the site. Given that there is already permission for 3 dwellings on the site, an increase of a single dwelling would not result in adverse impacts on the local road network. In addition, there is a public footpath to the east of the site which offers off-road pedestrian access to the facilities of Gweek, meaning residents would not be reliant on private motor vehicle for access to day-to-day services.

Evaluation

The submitted plans show how the proposal would fit within the context of the surrounding area, without resulting in harm to the character of the area. The principle of development is acceptable,



taking into account both the established Class Q fallback, the improvement to the site in the context of the wider setting, and the site being located within easy access to shops, services and community facilities of Gweek. As such, the proposed development should be approved, given its clear compliance with Policies 7 and 21 of the Cornwall Local Plan.

The scheme has been designed to preserve and enhance the character of the area, through the demolition of the large, unattractive barns to provide a more open appearance and a much higher standard of design. The reduction in built form on the site is an important benefit of the scheme, and along with the re-use of existing buildings and an effective use of redundant land, offers a sustainable approach to redeveloping the site.

The development would not result in any significant impact on any existing properties and the proposed development is acceptable in all three areas of sustainability – environmental, social and economic. It is a development that adheres with the core planning principles as set out in the NPPF.

The proposed development would be in keeping in both scale and design terms in the context of the surrounding built environment, and would greatly enhance the local area. The application is considered to have an acceptable impact in respect of all relevant material planning considerations.

Conclusions

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of two dwellings as an alternative to the Class Q fallback, improvements to the approved conversion of the blockwork barn, and the conversion of the stone barn to a single dwelling.

The development would represent a significant enhancement to the site, which is currently rundown and underused. Whilst there is an option to convert two of buildings under Class Q of the Permitted Development Order (confirmed by PA21/02190) to form three dwellings, the proposed scheme would offer a significant enhancement to the site over what has already been approved. It is established in case law that permitted development rights can legitimately represent a fallback position when considering alternative proposals for development at the same site.

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