



DUCHY *of* CORNWALL

Design and Access Statement



Duchy of Cornwall Nursery, Cott Road, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0HW

October 2021



Quality Audit			
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Revision Register			
Rev.	Date	Notes	By
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1.0 Terms of Reference

1.1 Applicant details:

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1.2 Agent details:

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1.3 Site address:

Duchy of Cornwall Nursery
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PL22 0HW



2.0 Introduction

2.1 This design and access statement has been produced by the Duchy of Cornwall in support of the accompanying planning application for the proposed extension to the Duchy of Cornwall Nursery main building to improve public and staff facilities, create new work areas, entrance foyer and till points, an orangery for all weather dining and a more comfortable experience for customers, twelve months of the year.

2.2 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following;

- The completed planning application form and ownership certificates.
- Site Location Plan
- Site Plan as existing
- Site Plan as proposed
- Plans existing and proposed
- Elevations existing and proposed
- Sections existing and proposed
- 3D internal and external images



3.0 Site and Context Analysis

3.1 Analysis of the Site

The application site is located approximately 1 mile to the north east of the town of Lostwithiel. The site falls within the Fowey valley and is in an area of great landscape value. The site has a northerly aspect and gently falls in the same direction, the site is screened to the south and east by trees.

Originally a slate quarry, the Duchy of Cornwall Nursery began life producing forest trees in the late 1960s. It started to sell plants to the public in 1974 and has since grown to become a destination for keen gardeners, plant collectors, home and garden retailing along with food, drink and events.





3.2 Analysis of the Surrounding Context

The surrounding valley is made up of mainly agricultural land [mostly grazing with some arable], to the west lies Restormel castle approximately ½ a mile away as the crow flies and Restormel Manor lies between the castle and the Nursery on the valley floor.

There are pockets of managed woodland surrounding the Nursery site through which a number of interconnecting footpaths allow good public access between the Nursery and Restormel Manor and beyond to either Lostwithiel town or towards the Lanhydrock estate.

3.3 Planning History

C2/09/01112 - Fri 16 Oct 2009 - Duchy Of Cornwall Nurseries Lostwithiel Cornwall PL22 0ET - Proposed replacement shop and new production greenhouse, new car parking and site access road.

PA14/02938 - Mon 28 Jul 2014 - Duchy of Cornwall Nursery Lostwithiel Cornwall PL22 0HW - Formation of car parking area within former woodland -

PA18/00029 - Tue 06 Mar 2018 - Duchy Of Cornwall Nursery Road From Grey Mare Farm To Cott Road Lostwithiel PL22 0HW - Kitchen extension -

PA21/00963 - Wed 02 Jun 2021 - Construction of overflow carpark on land adjacent to the existing carpark to include new access ramp and revised exit onto highway along with associated landscaping.

4.0 The development Proposal

The business has three core components, offering an extensive range of plants and horticultural products; a café and retail space for gifts and home wear. Following an extensive fire in 2007, a replacement shop, café and access to the premises were constructed and this building continues to be the main focus of the site. Since its construction in 2010, the business has outgrown the facilities provided, with limited seating space, inadequate office, customer toilets and no staff welfare facilities. Over the years, temporary arrangements have been made, with a portable tented tipi being erected in 2019 providing an additional 50 covers of dining space in clement weather.

The siting of the premises, in a rural location with far reaching views across the Fowey valley is a critical ingredient in the businesses success, offering an inspiring and relaxing venue for customers.

The business now employs approaching 70 staff: 39 full time and 24 part time.



The overall aspiration of this proposal is to provide the facilities and space to service our staff and customer's needs and reduce our dependency on weather dependant café covers. It is essential to our business model that the ambience of the site is maintained and the high quality aesthetic of the building further enhanced.

With its horticultural heart and associated summer visitor appeal, the nursery is affected by seasonal fluctuations in customer numbers, this puts pressure on the infrastructure during peak times and creates challenges for the business during the winter months, with relatively high levels of seasonal and part time work.

The provision of additional, reliable, under cover seating will allow us to smooth out the daily and seasonal fluctuations in customer numbers with an increase in permanent and full time staff.

The chart below illustrates the typical visitor numbers per month over a 12 month period.



With ongoing increases in numbers employed, facilities and work spaces are under much pressure. The existing office spaces are now cramped, over occupied and no longer fit for purpose. Dedicated staff toilets and change rooms are required and larger rest rooms and welfare spaces needed.

Customer facilities are now totally inadequate with only 3 units plus a dedicated accessible washroom for in excess of 400 daily visitors at times.

The Duchy nursery currently provides indoor dining for approximately 50 covers with additional outside seating and 50 covers within the large traditional tipi tented structure. This canvas covered space is however subject to weather conditions and at times through the cold winter months or when exceptional winds occur, does have to be closed.



The proposed orangery will provide undercover restaurant dining as a replacement for the tipi thus making the venue less weather dependant and a more reliable base for the business to operate from.

If the weather is poor, visitors wishing to eat, who do not want to wait for a table, often leave the venue thus creating an abortive vehicle journey. The additional indoor covers will help to avoid this situation. The Orangery will also offer bookable tables which will also help reduce unnecessary travel. The orangery will replace the tipi dining area with an equivalent number of covers.

In addition to the Orangery, the proposal encloses the area between the existing shop and the glasshouse creating a more comfortable all weather link. This will become a central hub providing the new entrance, improved toilet facilities and administration offices.



5.0 Design Rationale

5.1 The massing and form will take cues from the existing building so pitches, overhangs, eaves heights etc. will be as per the existing building.

5.2 The orangery is the only element which is a departure from the existing vernacular although fits well within the Nursery setting.

5.3 The current shop counter and paying area have become rather congested over the years and will be re-located into the new hub area which will ease the congestion.

5.4 The existing toilets have been inadequate for some time and combined with acting as staff toilets too means the current situation is not compliant with current regulations.

The re-location and increased provision of the toilet facilities along with having separate dedicated staff facilities will be of great importance

5.5 The administration and staff areas have also struggled for space and are currently not laid out in the most efficient way, the proposed mezzanine floor for office staff will be transformative as it will allow for more efficient working.

5.6 Tipi – The tipi has been in operation for a few years and has allowed for undercover dining although if the wind is high it cannot be used for reasons of comfort [Tipis can withstand severe weather but it can be noisy and not necessarily a relaxing place to enjoy food and drink].

The proposed orangery would look to replace the Tipi thus offering all weather accommodation, with bi-folding doors and a glazed lantern it will offer a pseudo alfresco dining experience with the benefit of weather protection during traditional Cornish weather.

5.7 Kitchen – Although the kitchen had an extension in 2018, the current layout is inefficient, with the increased space gained by re-locating the toilets and office the layout will become suitable for the current number of covers.

5.8 Materials – The material pallet for the proposed extension will continue the existing theme by using waney edged timber cladding along with cedar shingles on the roof.

The proposed new entrance will be created by a green oak cruck frame, this will be the dominating feature and ensure visitors are not confused about where to enter the premises.

The orangery will be constructed from timber with double glazed doors and lantern.



6.0 Access and Highways

The Duchy Nursery is signposted from two directions, vehicles travelling from the Liskeard direction are directed off the A390 at the junction north of Trewindle [SX 14285 63136] onto road C0254, then via the U6141 and the C0553 into the new overflow carpark.

Vehicles signposted from Lostwithiel travel along Cott road and enter the main carpark. New signage has recently been installed to ensure traffic is sent in the appropriate direction and to advise those that don't know of the alternative routes in and out following the northerly option. Recent in house surveys before and after the installation of this signage showed a shift of those using the northern end of Cott Road from 52% to 60% so already representing approximately 3,000 less cars using the lower section of Cott Road per annum. This preferred route will be communicated more widely to our customer base in due course.

Charging points for e-bikes will be provided on site to encourage the use of sustainable transport and our intention is to provide EV charging points once the existing network to our rural location is able to provide the capacity required to do so economically.

It is recognised that Cott Road is popular with pedestrians and our ambition is to create an extended off road pedestrian footpath on Duchy of Cornwall land, accessible from the boundary with the golf course, to directly opposite the nursery main entrance. This links to the existing extensive network of Duchy permissive paths within the valley. Our ambition is to enable the footway to extend to the outskirts of Lostwithiel and negotiations with our neighbouring landowner to potentially extend the walkway have been positive and they are receptive in principle to establishing this.



7.0 Sustainability

The existing bio-mass heating system has capacity to cater for the additional floor space and when combined with high levels of insulation creates little or no relative impact on the buildings outputs.

Existing bore hole spring water supply, rainwater harvesting, bio mass boiler to remain as sustainable utility sources as well as 100% green sourced electricity and bio lpg gas.

The timber cladding will be sourced from the Duchy estate and all other materials will be responsibly sourced to align with the Net Zero ambitions of the Duchy of Cornwall.

The majority of customers arrive at the premises by car and it planned to provide for on-site EV charging as soon as practicable.

Increasingly, customers are also using e bikes and these proposals provide for e bike charging.

Relatively few customers arrive on foot however, we recognise the potential to extend the existing network of permissive and public rights of way, to improve direct access to the premises and complete the Lostwithiel town circuit via Restormel avoiding using roads where that is possible. Whilst completing that circuit is not solely within the Duchy's gift, we are keen to work with our neighbours to secure these benefits.

8.0 Public consultation

On Wednesday the 22nd of September an open evening was held at the Duchy Nursery where the proposed plans were on display with Duchy staff on hand to answer any questions which arose.

The invite was sent in advance to Lostwithiel Town council and an advert appeared in the Lostwithiel Newsletter.





9.0 Summary

The proposed extension to the Duchy nursery building will provide a future proofed year round venue increasing the ability to enjoy this popular offering without the uncertainty of inclement weather curtailing the experience or reducing capacity.

Customer flow and vehicle movements will be smoothed, spread and reduced; improved control will also be achieved through bookable spaces being introduced.

Fourteen new full time posts are created, with part time positions reducing by 17% with the move to less variable employment. Facilities and work spaces for staff will be significantly improved.

Customer and accessible facilities will be transformed and congestion reduced in all areas.

Dining spaces and kitchen facilities are reorganised to allow for a speedier consistent service and flattening out peaks and troughs on any given day as well as throughout the year as a whole.

Security measures will be improved through having one controlled entrance/exit monitored at all times.

The opportunity of providing safe off road pedestrian access for some or all of the route to Lostwithiel and linking to existing valley trails provides an enjoyable direct or circular walk as an additional experience. Vehicles will be diverted wherever possible to the northern Cott Road route to and from their destination.