

Design & Access Statement

Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine
Crediton, Devon
EX17 4JU

Proposal:

***The demolition of an existing bungalow
and the construction of a replacement farmhouse***

Applicants

Mr & Mrs David Fox

October 2022

Design & Access Statement

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse
Applicants: Mr & Mrs David Fox

1. Brief Background to the Proposed Development

Dunscombe Farm is situated approximately 1 mile to the east of Cheriton Fitzpaine and approximately 6 miles to the north of the market town of Crediton. Refer to the Location Plan provided at **Appendix 1**.

The Applicants are David and Sarah Fox. David Fox (aged 52) moved to Dunscombe Farm in April 1999 with his parents, when they moved the family from Leicestershire to Devon. Dunscombe Farm is generally described as a traditional mixed lowland livestock unit. The total area farmed (including annual grass keep) extends to approximately 151ha (376 acres).

The existing farmhouse (subject to an agricultural occupancy restriction) is a bungalow of simple brick construction under an interlocking tile roof, with uPVC windows and softwood joinery. The bungalow has been vacant following the death of David's mother in 2018 and his father in 2019.

David Fox has inherited the farm and naturally he and Sarah intend to move into the farmhouse as it is much better related to the main range of farm buildings where the functional need to be on hand and available at most times of day and night arises, and is where they are able to provide adequate site security. David and Sarah currently live in a converted barn on the holding, but it is some 390 metres from the main farmstead.

However, the existing bungalow is in need of significant improvement and enlargement in order to meet modern environmental standards and the Applicants functional needs. Making any improvements to the existing property would be uneconomic and therefore, this application relates to the demolition of the existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse on the same site.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

2. General Descriptions

Dunscombe Farm is described as a traditional livestock unit, extending to approximately 43ha (106 acres). All of the land is generally within an unbroken ring fence, as shown edged in red on the Plan of the Holding provided at **Appendix 2**.

A further 28ha (70 acres) of bare land is rented from the adjoining Grew Farm (shown edged in green on the Plan of the Holding at Appendix 2) taking the total area farmed to approximately 71ha (176 acres). In addition, approximately 80ha (200 acres) of winter grass keep is taken locally each year between the months of November and March.

The main farmstead includes the bungalow which is the subject of this application, together with the following range of farm buildings:-

- Hay Barn – a three bay timber frame pole barn
- Workshop (former milking parlour and dairy)
- Sheep Shed – a six bay timber frame building (20.1m x 10.0m)
- General Purpose Building – a four bay steel frame building (18.3m x 10.2m)
- Covered Yard – a three bay steel frame building (13.7m x 14.0m)
- Open concrete yards
- General Purpose Building – a four bay steel frame building (18.3m x 13.7m)
- Lean-to Building off covered silage clamp – 5 bay steel frame building (20.7m x 6.7m)
- Stable Range – timber frame construction
- Office and general store – concrete block construction

A further range of farm buildings are situated to the south of the main farmstead, including a sheep shed (15.2m x 12.2m) of part timber and part concrete construction, together with a range of concrete buildings (former piggery) currently used for dry storage.

To the south east of the main range of farm buildings is a separate former farmstead described as Lower Dunscombe. Only two traditional barns remain, which were both converted in 2015 and 2016 respectively, and is where the Applicants currently live.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

3. Current Business Policy

3.1 Farming Policy

The current farming policy is based on a traditional sheep enterprise, including a core breeding flock of 425 ewes. The continued expansion of the sheep enterprise has required considerable investment in farm improvements, including buildings and fencing for example which is ongoing.

The sheep enterprise includes a core breeding flock of Poll Dorsets, which are lambed in two batches between the beginning of December and mid-January, and mid-February to the end of March. Approximately 720 lambs are produced each year and approximately 100 ewe lambs are retained annually for replacements. All of the remaining lambs and draught ewes are sold through Exeter Livestock Market.

The intention is to introduce a suckler herd of pedigree Hereford cows to compliment the sheep enterprise. The Applicants will start with a small herd building to approximately 15 - 20 cows, but this cannot be implemented until the Applicants live at the main farmstead so they are able to properly supervise calving.

In terms of cropping, the Applicants harvest approximately 350 – 400 bales of round bale haylage each year. The remainder of the grass and forage crops are managed for the existing livestock enterprise.

3.2 Diversification Policy

In 2017 planning permission was obtained for a tree tent (sleeps two) to provide additional income from holiday accommodation (planning reference 17/00317/FULL). The first guests arrived in May 2018 and this enterprise has been highly successful. In 2018 and 2019 the occupancy rates between May and October were 80% and 85% respectively. The pandemic delayed the start of the 2020 season but occupancy rates from July to October 2020 and again in 2021 were at 90%.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

It is anticipated that further tree tents or other forms of low key and sustainable holiday accommodation may be added in the future (subject to the appropriate planning permissions).

In addition to the existing holiday accommodation, the Applicants also rent out the Tallet Barn at Lower Dunscombe which was converted in 2016 (reference 14/01281/FULL) under an assured shorthold tenancy, providing additional non-farming income.

4. Planning History

The following planning history is relevant to this holding-

96/00502/FULL

Grant of conditional planning permission on 25 October 1996

Erection of a detached bungalow

(together with a corresponding Section 106 agreement dated 22 October 1996)

01/00173/FULL

Grant of conditional planning permission 02 May 2001

Erection of single storey extension to the bungalow and double garage

(Note: This proposed development was never implemented)

13/00356/FULL

Grant of conditional planning permission 13 May 2013

Conversion of a barn to a dwelling

(Note: Currently occupied by the Applicants)

14/01281/FULL

Grant of conditional planning permission 06 October 2014

Conversion of a Tallet barn to a dwelling

17/00317/FULL

Grant of conditional planning permission 06 July 2017

Change of use of land for the siting of a tree tent (holiday restriction applies)

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

5. Summary of the Proposed Development

The proposed development relates to the replacement of an existing single storey bungalow with a new two storey farmhouse. The existing bungalow occupies a position immediately adjacent to the main range of farm buildings, as shown on the Existing Site Plan (Drawing No. 221.09-001.C).

The proposed replacement dwelling will be situated on the same site as existing, which is perfectly situated to meet the functional needs of the business.

The new farmhouse will be occupied by the Applicants. Their current home at Lower Dunscombe (a barn converted under reference 13/00356/FULL) will either be used for holiday accommodation or let under an assured shorthold tenancy to further add to the existing level of non-farming income.

6. Functional Justification

6.1 Siting

The replacement dwelling will be positioned on the same site as the existing bungalow. The existing site is well related to the main range of farm buildings where the functional need to be on hand and available at most times of day and night arises, and is where the Applicants are able to provide adequate site security,

6.2 Condition of Existing Dwelling

The existing dwelling is a very simple construction and was built with low quality materials, including poor provision in terms of energy efficiency and insulation. The existing building is a single storey structure and relatively anonymous, it does not reflect the local materials or its rural context.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

Whilst it might be possible to retrofit the existing dwelling to bring the property up to modern standards, this is not an economically viable proposition when compared with the comparatively simple task of building a replacement (modern) dwelling. Refer to the photographs of the existing dwelling provided at **Appendix 3**.

6.3 Functional Requirements of Proposed Farmhouse

The Applicants require the replacement dwelling to provide three bedrooms, together with a large farmhouse style open plan kitchen/diner, and a living room.

The open plan kitchen/diner is important as this is the heart of any farmhouse, and often doubles as the meeting space for suppliers, sales representatives and contractors.

The replacement farmhouse will also include a farm office, as the majority of the farm paperwork and record keeping is conducted in the evenings. The accommodation also provides a boot room, a secure medicine and treatment cabinet, a shower room, WC and utility, being close to the back door where it is easily accessible from the outside.

The replacement dwelling includes a laundry room, which is required to service the needs of the existing holiday accommodation, whilst also providing the necessary facilities to allow this part of the business to grow in the future.

7. Relevant Planning Policy Considerations

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the 'Development Plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material planning considerations can include other policy documents such as any local neighbourhood planning guidance and national planning policy. Other material considerations would include local circumstances, for example specific benefits of bringing a proposal forward.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

In this case the Development Plan consists of the *Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 - 2033*, which was adopted in July 2020. The following sets out the key policies which are considered relevant to the proposals:-

Spatial Strategy

“Countryside

Development in countryside areas outside defined towns and villages, including hamlets and other small settlements, will be targeted to:

- *Meet agricultural and other rural business needs*
- *Promote environmental enhancement including landscape and biodiversity*
- *Encourage appropriate economic diversification to support the rural economy*
- *Provide infrastructure to meet the needs of the community”*

The proposed replacement dwelling is required to meet the functional requirements of both the existing and future business. The existing diversified activities are also essential to ensure the business remains economically viable in the face of significant cuts in traditional financial support mechanisms which have historically underpinned the viability of small farms

Policy DM10 - Replacement dwellings in rural areas

“The construction of replacement dwellings outside defined settlement limits will be permitted where the replacement dwelling’s floorspace will be no greater in size than the existing dwelling, taking into account any unspent permitted development rights”

Policy DM10 is supportive of the principle of replacement dwellings, but understandably does seek to restrict significant enlargement. However, the circumstances in this case are different to most applications, because the replacement dwelling is required to meet the functional needs of the current and future business. Therefore, the functional needs of the business and the corresponding size requirements of the replacement farmhouse are a relevant consideration. This is explained further in Section 8.3 below.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

Policy DM1 - High quality design

“Designs of new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles:

- a) Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;*
- b) Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a);*
- c) Positive contribution to local character including any heritage or biodiversity assets and the setting of heritage assets;*
- d) Creation of safe and accessible places that also encourage and enable sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling;*
- e) Visually attractive places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of:
 - i) Architecture*
 - ii) Siting, layout, scale and massing*
 - iii) Orientation and fenestration*
 - iv) Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure**
- f) Appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), including arrangements for future maintenance, and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available;*
- g) Adequate levels of daylight, sunlight and privacy to private amenity spaces and principal windows;*
- h) Suitably sized rooms and overall floorspace which allows for adequate storage and movement within the building together as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard with external spaces for recycling, refuse and cycle storage; and*
- i) On sites of 10 houses or more the provision of 20% of dwellings built to Level 2 of Building Regulations Part M ‘access to and use of dwellings’.”*

Due to the style of its construction and its physical appearance the existing dwelling does not add anything to the character of the locality. The siting of the proposed replacement dwelling has been designed to benefit from the natural screening the height the established hedge banks provide on two sides of the site. The proposed dwelling would only be visible when viewed from the south, but the nearest public viewpoint is a considerable distance from the proposed site and therefore any visual impact will be based on long distance views and will therefore be negligible. The proposed siting arrangements will allow the replacement dwelling to better harmonise with the locality, through careful design and choice of materials.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

Policy DM8 - Rural workers' dwellings

“Applications for rural workers’ dwellings will be permitted where:

- a) It can be demonstrated that the nature and demands of an existing rural business are such that a full time worker has an essential need to be permanently resident at or near their place of work so they are available at most times;*
- b) The need cannot be met within a nearby settlement, or by existing housing at or near the site or through the conversion of a suitable redundant or disused rural building at the site;*
- c) The size and scale of rural workers dwellings will be commensurate with the scale of the operation and designed to reflect the location and setting of the proposed site; and***
- d) The rural enterprise has been established for at least three years, is currently financially sound, and has a clear prospect of remaining so”*

Applications for new farmhouses and agricultural dwellings recognise (under Policy DM8) that the scale of the proposed dwelling will be commensurate with the scale of the operation and the functional needs of the business. This is explained further in Section 8.3 below.

Policy S9 - Environment

“Development will sustain the distinctive quality, character and diversity of Mid Devon’s environmental assets and minimise the impact of development on climate change through:

..... high quality sustainable design which reinforces the character and distinctiveness of Mid Devon’s historic built environment, mitigates and adapts to climate change and creates attractive places;

The proposed building will be conventionally constructed with its massing, detailing and materials relating to the local vernacular. The building is to be of two storey construction and a simple form.

The house will be of high quality construction and materials. The external elevations will be a mix of reclaimed brick, larch timber cladding and lime render, under a natural slate roof. Windows and doors will be powder coated aluminium and the external joinery (fascias and barge boards) will be softwood timber. The building will be constructed to standards of insulation and energy use in excess of the current Building Regulations.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

National Planning Policy Framework (2021):

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Supporting a prosperous rural economy:

Paragraph 85 states that "planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable".

8 Design Principles & Concept

8.1 Use:

The replacement dwelling shall be used as a principal dwelling and farmhouse, to support the functional needs of the existing farming and diversified business.

8.2 Layout:

The Proposed Layout of the replacement dwelling is shown on Drawing No 221.09-004.C. The living accommodation provides an open plan entrance hall, kitchen/diner, snug and living room on the ground floor, together with 3 bedrooms (one en suite) and a bathroom on the first floor.

In addition, the ground floor includes a farm office which can be accessed from both outside and inside, and a utility/boot room, shower room and laundry which are all required to support the functional needs of the farming and diversified enterprises.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

8.3 Scale:

Planning permission was obtained for a single storey extension to Dunscombe Farm bungalow under reference 01/00173, together with a detached double garage. This would have extended the existing floor area by 114m² creating a new total area of 212m² (measured externally). However, this consent was never implemented and has subsequently lapsed.

Three recent agricultural dwellings have been approved in the parish of Cheriton Fitzpaine, summarised as follows:-

20/01991/FULL	Thornes Farm (Land from Redyeates Cross to Hayne Cross) A new Principal Farmhouse (4 bedrooms) <u>Floor Area 180 m²</u> (gross internal area)
18/02006/FULL	Orchard Hayes Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine A second agricultural workers dwelling (3 bedroom) <u>Floor Area 153m²</u> (gross internal area)
15/01419/FULL	Broadi Park (Part Orchard Hayes Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine) A principal agricultural dwelling <u>Floor Area – 223m²</u> (gross internal area) <i>(Note: Area incorrectly reported as circa 180m² in application)</i>

The replacement dwelling at Dunscombe Farm is considered to be commensurate with the functional needs of the Applicants and their business. Refer to Section 6 above. The replacement dwelling provides 193m² of living space (gross internal area) which is only slightly larger than the recent comparable at Thornes Farm (20/01991/FULL) and is less than Broadi Park (15/01419/FULL).

The farm office measures an additional 13m² and the utility/boot room, shower room and laundry adds a further 23m². These areas are attached to the living accommodation because this works from a practical and functional perspective.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

8.4 Appearance:

The proposed replacement dwelling is dormer style in appearance, which is intended to keep the ridge line of the proposed dwelling below that of the nearby dutch barn, and to minimise the impact of the development in the landscape.

In terms of materials, the external elevations will be a mix of reclaimed brick, larch timber cladding and lime render, under a natural slate roof. Windows and doors will be powder coated aluminium, and the external joinery (fascias and barge boards) will be softwood timber.

8.5 Drainage

Foul drainage shall be connected to the existing septic tank, situated in the field to the south of the southern boundary (refer to Drawing No 221.09-002). The drainage field is positioned in the field to the west of the septic tank (more than 50 metres from the existing borehole water supply) under a Consent to Discharge (reference 201036/SA/01).

Surface water shall be collected and piped to a clean water drainage system and a new clean water soakaway

8.6 Landscaping:

The siting of the proposed replacement dwelling is the same as existing, to benefit from the proximity of the site to the existing range of farm buildings and close enough to be “within sight and sound” for the purpose of lambing (and calving in the future).

The replacement dwelling will also benefit from the natural screening the height that the established hedge banks provide on two sides of the site.

The proposed dwelling would only be visible when viewed from the south, but the nearest public viewpoint is a considerable distance from the proposed site and therefore any visual impact will be based on long distance views and will therefore be negligible.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

9. Biodiversity and Protected Species

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Quantock Ecology in September 2021. Bat droppings were found present in the building and therefore, a full emergence/re-entry survey was undertaken in August 2022 – a copy of the full report has been submitted with this application.

The Emergence and Activity Survey reported that the existing building is an occasional summer day roost for a single common pipistrelle, and a low number of brown long eared bats. The report made the following recommendations:-

- i) An application for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will need to be submitted and approved by Natural England, in order for the works to proceed, and
- ii) Due to the small number of common species present, the site is suitable to be registered by an approved consultant, under the low impact bat mitigation class license system.

In terms of mitigation, Quantock Ecology recommended the use of a *Schwegler 2F Universal Bat Box* (or equivalent) and a *Schwegler 1FR Bat Tube* (or equivalent). It was agreed with Quantock Ecology that these could be placed at the apex on the eastern gable as this is partially facing south – refer to the sketch plan provided by Quantock Ecology at **Appendix 4**, which has been incorporated into the corresponding plans submitted with this application (Drawing No. 221.09-005.B).

10. Arboricultural Considerations

There are no trees within the site itself that will be affected by the proposed works.

There are trees on two of the site boundaries that contribute to the landscape character of the area, but these will be unaffected by the proposed works.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

11. Proposes Access Arrangements

The existing access arrangements to the farmstead and the replacement dwelling remain unchanged.

12. Pre-Application Advice

Pre-application advice was received from Mid Devon District Council on 16th February 2022 (under reference 21/02323/PREAPP). The Pre-application advice was based on detailed plans and supporting documents, and came to the following conclusion:-

“The proposed design provides an uplift in scale to 193sqm with accommodation over two levels. I have checked the decision notice for the existing dwelling and it appears the permitted development rights are still intact. Having regard to the uplift that could theoretically be achieved through unspent permitted development rights, the scope of extensions previously approved (not built) and the scale in comparison to other permitted agricultural workers dwellings as highlighted in your case, it is my view that the proposed uplift in scale is likely to be supportable in principle.

The design of the dwelling is proposed as dormer style accommodation which is considered to be preferable to full two storey accommodation in this location. In my view the design and scale of the dwelling is generally acceptable in this location, particularly in terms of the high quality material palette outlined in the D & A statement”.

The detailed plans and drawings submitted with this application are the same as those submitted in relation to the Pre-application advice, save that very minor amendments have been made to the design in order to incorporate the requirements of bat mitigation and Building Regulation requirements.

Continued

Property: Dunscombe Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton, Devon EX17 4JU
Proposal: The demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a replacement farmhouse

Design & Access Statement Continued

In conclusion, we feel the proposed development should be supported for the following reasons:-

- The replacement farmhouse fulfils a functional need on an established holding;
- The proposed scheme is sympathetic to the character, scale, setting and design of the existing buildings and the surrounding area, and results in an enhancement of its setting through the creation of an attractive rural building that occupies an inobtrusive position within the site; and
- The proposed farmhouse would not harm the area's distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities. The form, bulk and design of the proposed building is in keeping with the surroundings and local building styles.

There are no obvious planning grounds which would suggest that planning permission should not be granted.



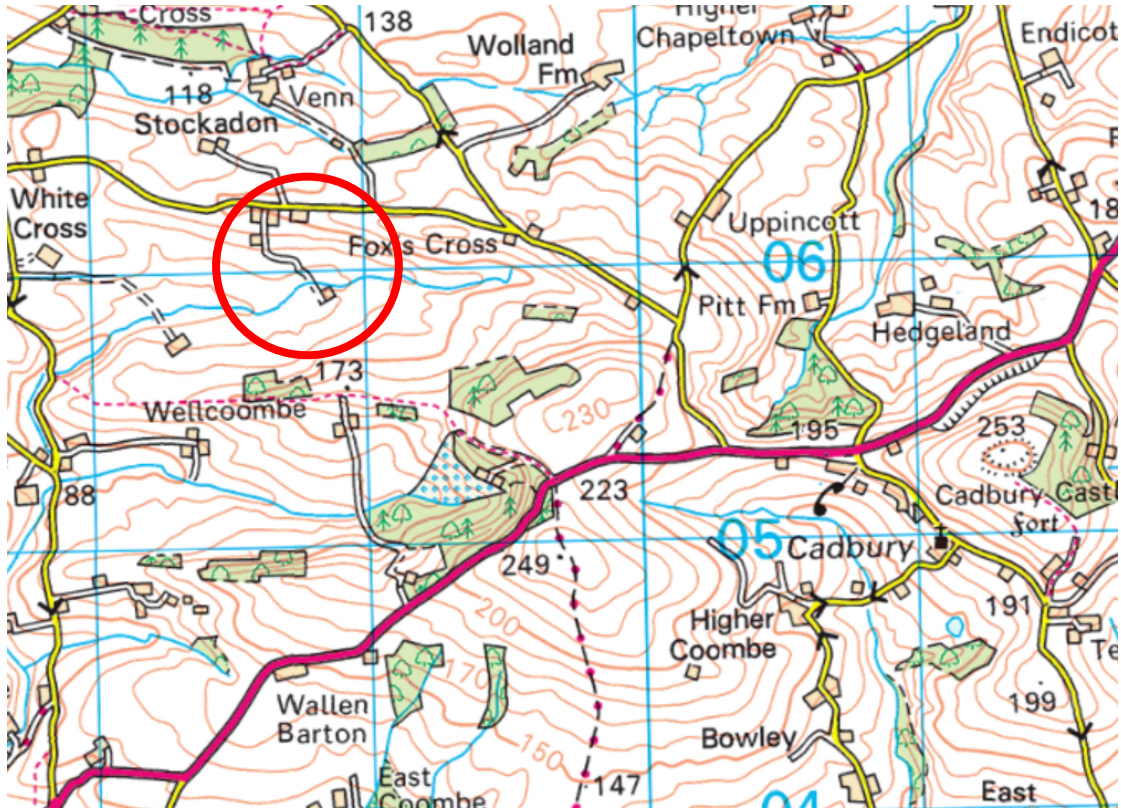
.....
Steve Talling (Agent for the Applicants)

21st October 2022

Steve Talling Consulting Ltd
Western Cottage
Blackborough
Cullompton
Devon EX15 2HQ

Appendix 1

Location Plan



Dunscombe Farm
Cheriton Fitzpaine
Crediton
Devon

Appendix 3

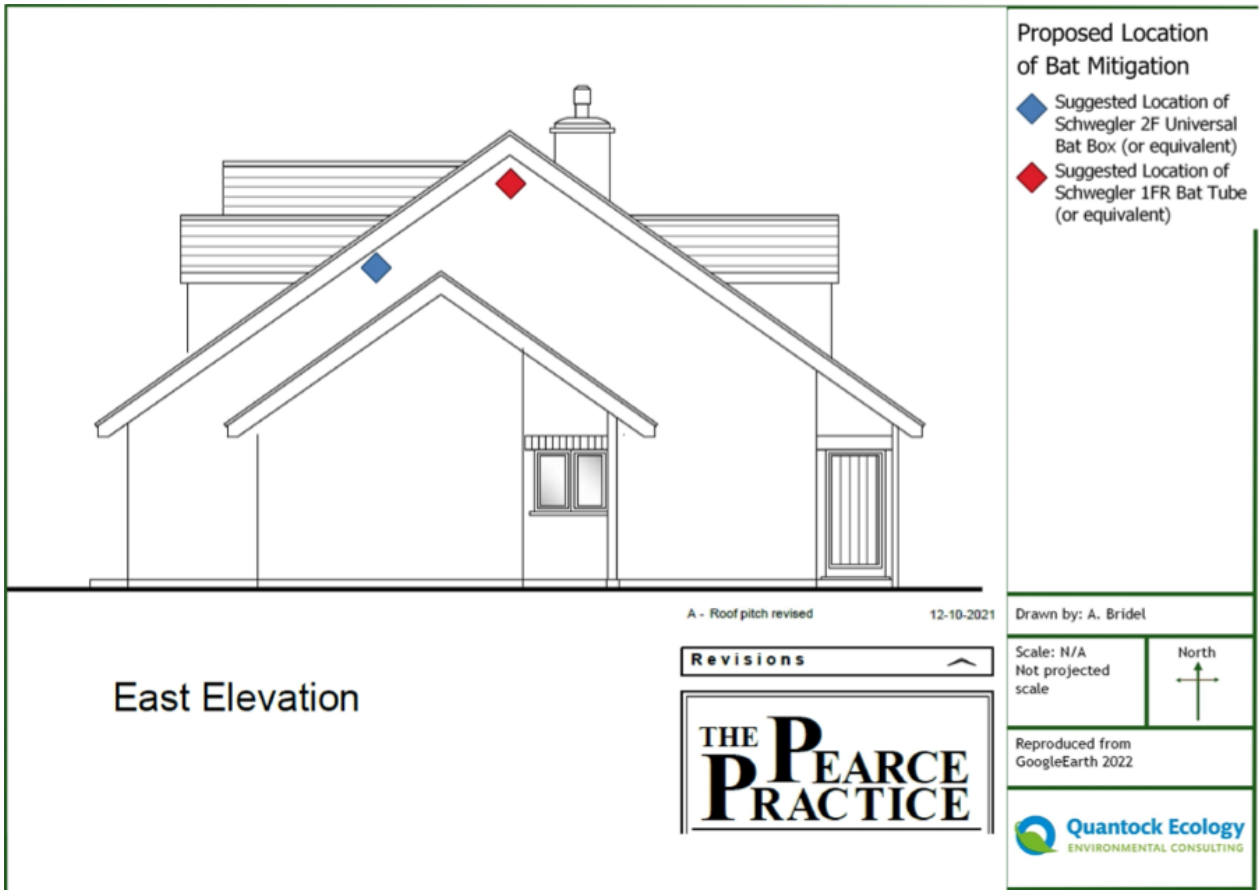
Photographs (Existing Dwelling)



Duncombe Farm
Cheriton Fitzpaine
Credton
Devon

Appendix 4

Bat Mitigation Requirements (Quantock Ecology)



Duncombe Farm
Cheriton Fitzpaine
Credton
Devon