



Design & Access Statement including Critical Drainage Statement

For Resubmission of application for a new dwelling

At The Workshop, Blandford, Carnon Crescent, Carnon Downs

**Site location:**

The single storey workshop is located on Carnon Crescent in the village of Carnon Downs. The workshop is surrounded by dwellings and belongs to the family that own the dwelling 'Blandford' on the opposite side of the road. The workshop has been in the family for in excess of 60 years. However, the workshop has not been used as a workshop for over 20 years and as a result is falling into disrepair. The existing structure is built from a range of materials including a metal sheet roof and timber and metal panels to the walls. In keeping with the adjacent properties the workshop is set back from the road but not as much as the adjacent houses with their drives and front gardens. The property is not shielded from the road unlike the majority of the adjacent properties. The lean-to structure against the main building belong to others, has recently been demolished in order to build an approved double garage just off the pavement.

**Pre-application advice:**

Advice was sought in August 2021 under application PA21/02187/PREAPP, and the case officer was Janice Taylor. Advice was received in December 2021 which confirmed that; "the site is considered an appropriate location in principle for the provision of residential development." However, there were a few caveats cited to ensure any design would meet the Council Design guide and sit well on the site. These were a) concern over ability to provide enough amenity space b) avoid any overlooking c) avoid the building feeling cramped on the site and d) taking cues from the existing character of the area and not introducing new elements.

Due to the sites location and with Carnon Downs not as a main town as named in Policy 3 of the Cornwall local plan, it was still felt that under Policy 3 this site met the infill requirements. It was also noted that under the Feock Parish FNDP policy H1, this site would also be classed and accepted as infill within a settlement boundary.

An application PA23/01131 was submitted in March 2023 based on the advice given. There was concern about the massing of the building and the amount of amenity space along with objections from the neighbours behind the site. The application was withdrawn and this is a resubmission within 12 months of the original application.

**Planning designations:**

The site is not within any designated areas such as conservation area, AONB, SSSI or World Heritage Site. The property is not listed and nor are the neighbours. These facts make the site a great area for a development that is undertaken sensitively. The site is also close to two zones identified in the 2012-2015 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

**Critical drainage and flood zones:**

The site is not within a critical drainage zone. The site comes under Flood zone 1 and does not sit within an area susceptible to either ground water or surface water flooding. Thus from that point of view the site would be suitable for conversion from a workshop to a domestic dwelling. On the

southern edge of the site there is an existing gully drainage channel for surface water runoff, which will be retained as part of the design.

#### **Sustainability:**

The site sits within an established and developed area of housing within the village of Carnon Downs. The village benefits from a regular bus service with a bus stop not too far from the site. The village also has many shops and facilities and amenity space. Carnon Downs is also a great location for road access to travel to either Truro or Falmouth with ease or to Redruth and beyond via the back roads. The site also benefits from having services such as electricity already connected. As such the site would be classed as sustainable under the NPPF.

The current countywide need for housing is growing and the opportunity for infill development as opposed to the development of green belt land should be encouraged. There is also a growing demand for places to rent with a number of business in the county struggling to house staff. This is an ideal opportunity to provide local housing as part of an infill development.

#### **Access:**

There is ready access to public transport with footways for pedestrian accessing the bus stop and local services in Carnon Downs. There would be no need for reliance upon private transport, although parking space has been provided within the amenity area. The proposed design will therefore comply with Policies 2 and 27 of the Cornwall Local Plan.

Under the original application the Ramblers association raised a concern about vehicles manoeuvring onto the site and potentially having wheels on the public footpath. The footpath is already crossed by vehicles either entering the neighbour's driveway adjacent to the site, the lane further along and occasionally for access to the sub-station. It should also be noted that the approved double garage, under construction will require vehicles to park and cross the footpath to access the garage. With this level of precedent and the creation of a parking space off and away from the footpath, it would be hard to see how such comments could be supported again.

#### **Planning history:**

There are a number of cases which would suggest that the site could be developed and such an application supported.

**PA21/00620** (*approved April 2021*) *Proposed single storey extension at 4 Carnon Crescent.* This application demonstrates that the adjacent properties can be adapted and extended to meet the needs of the owners.

**PA20/07151** *Alterations and extension to existing dwelling, together with demolition of existing workshop and replacement with new double garage.* The workshop in question is the one juxtaposed to our clients and thus the approval demonstrates that the workshops can be developed. This application had no concerns from the Parish Council.

**PA16/10477** *Annexe within garden area of existing dwelling.* Whilst this is an older approval it is only a few doors away from the site and approved an annexe that was not physically attached to the

main house. Such an approach could be employed here with the replacement building being an annexe to the main house and tied to the main house.

**PA21/03284** *Proposed outline application for demolition of existing garage and construction of new dwelling in garden.* This application was approved with conditions in July 2021 and further strengthens the case and support for this application.

It should also be noted that the housing to the east of the site and forming the same frontage has all been approved and built as infill development over several years. This further demonstrates that the area can support housing and that there is a need for it in this area. Also the number of more recent applications would also confirm that the area is continuing to grow organically and infill vacant areas for sustainable growth and local housing.

### **Description of the proposal:**

The workshop is in need of major renovation. The state of repairs is such that the financial implications would suggest a new build would be more cost effective and ensure a building fit for the current climate with regards energy efficiency and building regulations. Based upon the advice received in the pre-application a design for a 2-storey house is proposed.

The design has been through many revisions and refinements to achieve the current design. Initially a conversion was explored based upon the original footprint of the workshop. This achieved a very compact one-bedroom flat with limited parking and garden.

After this 3 and 2-storey options were explored but it left no real amenity space and overpowered the site. This led to the modified design which was submitted. The original and thus withdrawn application was designed as follows: - *The east side of the building is 2 storey but the west side of the property is single storey. The single storey element is on the first floor to enable parking for 2 vehicles on the site and to link the rear patio with the front garden. This also ensures that the amenity area is more than adequate. On one of the submitted plans, areas and proposed amenity space use has been shown to further demonstrate this. The amenity area is twice the floor area of the ground floor dwelling.*

This resubmission has come about due to the Council choosing to implement the National Space Standards. This meant the original design was larger and the amenity area needed to be increased to meet such standards. These new standards replace any regional standards and sit solely within the planning system as a new form of technical planning standard. These standards can only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need and where the viability of development is not compromised. How these are being interpreted and implemented will impact designs county wide and increase build costs and thus house prices and the need for greater amenity space and large buildings will reduce the number of available and suitable plots or require considered design as the case here.

The new design takes onboard the space standard requirements, the recent need to respond to the Councils climate emergency stance for low energy buildings and several of the comments raised by the neighbours. The design is for reverse level living with spaces that require little light on the ground floor. The main living accommodation is on the first floor with where windows and rooflights can provide good levels of light. The wall facing the rear neighbours has no windows so there can be

no overlooking or looking into their garden. The west elevation has no windows to avoid overlooking onto the neighbouring garages that belong to someone else and are currently under construction.

The building has been moved to the opposite side of the site to avoid the east boundary wall forming part of the neighbour's driveway. By doing this we also avoid any building directly in front of any windows. Both Mr and Mrs Cooper raised concerns individually concerning privacy and light. They commented how they had undertaken work on the garden and cut back some elements to increase light to their home including items on the boundary. Such action also reduces privacy both ways. Those considering the application should also note that our client could erect a 2m high fence on their boundary without the need for a planning application if they so wished. Mr & Mrs Cooper could also do the same. However, it is hoped that the new design will avoid any such conflict.

It should be noted that the set of comments made originally by Mrs Cooper as a "continuation" did not relate to the application but to other points and works by others in the vicinity. The key points raised by Mr Cooper related to: -

- 1) Overlooking and loss of privacy
- 2) Overshadowing and overbearing impact
- 3) Unreasonable noise and disturbance.

Point 3 was also raised by Mrs Cooper where she stated any building will cause "extreme noise and disruption to our daily lives"; I trust the current works to the garages are not causing too much distress.

One of the challenges of a two-storey design especially within an infill situation is the impact upon neighbours. To help with this a topographical survey was undertaken by others to provide levels and eaves heights along with window locations of the neighbouring building behind the site. Whilst it is impossible to develop and not impact views out, we have tried to reduce any impact as much as possible. Windows have been omitted from walls that would create overlooking and it should also be noted that the rear neighbours have themselves removed planting on the boundary. Privacy works both ways.

On the elevations we have shown the current workshop and the eaves of the rear neighbouring property along with the proposed ridge height of the approved and under construction garages by others. This is to help gauge impact and height in relation to the current buildings. We have also looked at reducing the overall height, but the space standards adopted by the council require headroom to all floors of 2.3m. We have vaulted the first-floor ceiling in order to reduce the ceiling at eaves level but ensure over 80% of the first floor achieves the minimum height requirement as required by the standard adopted by the Council.

We have also made the building more compact, thus reducing its mass and impact upon the site. This also reduces any impact upon neighbours and allows the opportunity to create a fenced off and thus private garden/amenity area. Whilst not a requirement of the space standards, we have shown indicative furniture and amenity area layouts to confirm all will work. By enclosing the amenity space, the separate parking space with planting helps to push the building further back from the pavement than the current workshop to create a space that can easily be parked in to avoid being on or near the pavement. The property is also designed as a single person dwelling and as such there is

no need for multiple spaces. This helps maintain public rights of way and privacy for the occupants and neighbours.

To the south elevation where the views out have been located, we have created a buffer space between the property and the footpath, and this further keeps the property from overlooking the bungalow in front of them across the road. The windows on the first floor will naturally have curtains further reducing their view out. However, by having the living space on the first floor the occupancy of that space will be limited by working patterns of the occupant etc and thus the time spent looking out is limited. The ground floor window being to a bedroom, is a high level window for privacy and will also have curtains or blinds for privacy. From the first-floor windows to the neighbouring property directly opposite it is almost 12m.

The majority of the windows have been located on the east elevation facing the enclosed garden. This will ensure good levels of daylight and the rooflights to the first floor will provide good levels of sunlight to the proposed dwelling. The enclosed garden is partly enclosed by the neighbours fence and planting which will help to give the space a greater sense of size as if it continues beyond the fence. The amenity space is also greater than the ground floor footprint. That does not include the parking area which historically has also been considered amenity space due to the benefit off street parking brings. All the above measures help deal with the first 2 concerns raised by the neighbours and also improve the design from the original withdrawn submission. This development of the design produces a better response that should benefit all and enable a new energy efficient dwelling to be constructed for local residents.

Concerning the comments regarding noise, yes there will be construction noise but due to the site, it is proposed to use SIPS and thus have most of the works completed in a factory for transportation to site. This will greatly reduce any construction related disturbances and will help to reduce the build time. As for noise in use, that is beyond planning and is an issue that could also be used in the other direction. At present there are building works progressing by others and good contractors now tend to follow methodologies such as the Considerate Construction scheme and thus seek to reduce noise whilst on site.

When it comes to materials and external finishes it is hard to find a material that has not been used in the local area long the crescent. Close to the property wall finishes of brick, render, timber cladding and slate hanging can be found. Roof finishes also vary from man made slates, natural slate and concrete tiles. It has therefore been decided to reflect the most prominent materials in the area but also reflect the existing workshop in material choice. To that end it is proposed that the walls are rendered and painted with a section of timber cladding. The roof is to be finished in a commercial sheet material to look like the original workshop and the windows will be a modern contemporary black aluminium finish.

The new design provides greater, private amenity space. It meets the newly adopted space standards. It provides greater privacy to all and grants those directly behind more light and views. The parking space created is useable and beneficial and provides better access than the approved adjacent garages. The design also does well under the new energy assessment required by the council despite being a difficult house type to meet such standards. We believe that the design will fit in and benefit the community as its owners have a long family connection to the area and wish to benefit the community with a new local dwelling.

**Conclusion:**

We believe that the site can sustain the proposed development. Any visual impact has been mitigated by the use of materials that reflect the adjacent buildings. It can also be argued that the removal of the workshop in its current condition is a planning gain and thus a further improvement on the street scene. This is an excellent opportunity for a local infill development. As a practice we are not aware of any planning constraints but seek the guidance of the planning department concerning this matter with regards established and emerging policies.

**Photos: -**

View from road. Green doors belong to client's property, the white door belongs to the building under PA20/07151. Note parking zone to side of building guarded with a chain.



View of front of existing workshop building





Photo showing step up in level to property behind client's workshop and northern boundary.



View of space behind building and edge of adjacent building to be removed under PA20/07151.



Photo showing typical condition of current workshop.



Properties across the road showing a mix of finishes including grey timber effect cladding.



Property directly opposite site and its neighbour showing a further mix of materials including stone cladding. Note lack of windows from bungalow onto road for privacy.



Property with separate timber clad annexe just 3 doors away from site.



Properties on same side of road as site finished with pebble dashed render and obscured by hedge and fence panels.



View of neighbouring driveway to house behind the site. The ridge heights used on the elevation are taken off the topographical survey which picked up the ridge height and window cill heights.



View of northern boundary looking towards neighbour and showing how house is already obscured by established planting. Note also the brick forming the boundary wall. Since the original application this has been pruned back by the rear neighbour and opened up by them.



Photo showing lean to structure against workshop, now demolished.



Photo showing new double garage belonging to others under construction as per their approval.

