

JUSTIFICATION FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENT

01.10.21

INTRODUCTION:

This document has been composed by Llewellyn Harker Lowe Architects & Tresco Estate to support an application for the temporary change of use of an existing agricultural plot to Class C3 to provide a total of 7 units of temporary workers accommodation, plus an additional laundry unit, for a period of no more than 3 years.

This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and design and access statement.

OUTLINING THE REQUIREMENT:

This application is a resubmission of previously approved application P/21/033/COU and seeks to provide an additional two units of accommodation, plus an additional communal laundry cabin. Due to the COVID bounceback effect on the UK tourism industry, the tourism season on Tresco has been elongated, and occupancy levels of existing housing stock on the island are higher than anticipated. As a result, an additional two units of accommodation are required on top of the 5 previously approved.

Construction on Tresco is a sensitive issue, the island relies on tourism as its principal source of income and it is essential that the visitor experience and reputation of the destination is not undermined by disruption resulting from building works.

Tresco estate typically programmes building projects to be undertaken over a single off-season winter period. This requires a compressed construction programme that requires more trades overlapping on site and a greater workforce than would normally be the case for a typical build. Accordingly the new staff accommodation will start on the 1st November 2021 and be completed by the end of March 2022. It is expected that there will be between 45 and 50 builders on Tresco this winter, (this is in addition to the normal annual maintenance contractors including service engineers etc).

The Blockhouse is a large complex project with a 42 week build programme, this will necessitate builders being on Island from 1st November 2021 until the end of August 2022 with at least 25 workers on site. To achieve this Tresco Estate plans to construct Blockhouse over 2 winters with a hiatus from March 22 until October 22 and then completion in March 2023. This will enable the bulk of the tradesmen to use vacant holiday accommodation. During the pause in the works there will be a smaller group of contractors retained on the Island undertaking quiet works such as first fix electrics and plumbing on the site. This will be between 6 -10 personnel depending on the trades required.

Guest cottages on Tresco are already fully booked throughout the next year (2022). Due to the Island share business model, the properties which are under Island Share cannot be accessed by the Estate for those weeks which further limits capacity. COVID Policy instigated through the varied and numerous lockdowns has also resulted in the Estate committing properties to those disrupted in 2020 and 2021 into 2023. The Estate has also elongated the season in this current year to include November and December 2021.

As a consequence there is insufficient holiday accommodation available for builders, and due to the nature of the business and the elongated season all staff accommodation is fully utilised. The redevelopment of Blockhouse will also reduce the number of staff / contractor accommodation units available whilst the completion of the new staff accommodation is awaited.

The estate has identified 3 holiday properties that will house staff from this October. They have investigated providing other accommodation on other islands but there necessary capacity is not available. Furthermore locating workers off island reduces efficiency, with wasted travel time boating personnel each day. Off-island accommodation also makes progress more vulnerable to disruption in the event of bad weather.

To ensure that the Staff Accommodation and New Inn projects are complete within the condensed build programme over the coming winter (prior to March 2022) – the contractor intends to send workers out to the Islands to undertake enabling and site mobilisation works; including the construction of the foundations for the staff accommodation. As the island is fully booked until November 2021 with no spare capacity for workers, the only option is to seek additional temporary accommodation.

The temporary site accommodation will provide construction jobs throughout the summer when the Estate would normally clear the island. Through the course of this build there will be permanent resident contractors on the islands throughout the year including a site manager/foreman. Whilst the construction workers are not long-term permanent staff their presence supports essential island operations including the steamship company and new helicopter service. Local businesses also benefit from the presence of well paid workers with liquid income, particularly at times when income from tourism is reduced through the off-season.

If the estate had to use staff accommodation to house tradesmen, the inevitable consequence would be a less services and roles available on the Estate and a reduction in services available to visitors. This accommodation facilitates the refurbishment of the New Inn and redevelopment of Blockhouse projects that will generate positions for a further 5 Full Time Employees on Tresco.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed accommodation is temporary, it is required to facilitate an exciting and essential phase of development on Tresco that will underpin the future business model of the entire estate. Once this phase of works is complete the accommodation will be removed and the land returned to its original condition.