

Council of the Isles of Scilly

Planning Application

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By Tom.Anderton at 3:50 pm, Aug 29, 2025

Ref: P/25/067/FUL

Consultation Response

Date: 6th August 2025

Ref: [P/25/067/FUL](#)

Site: Land At Borough, Borough, Tresco, Isles Of Scilly.

Proposal: Redevelopment of the area around Borough Farmhouse to include demolition of Borough Farmhouse and construction of replacement two storey dwelling, conversion of existing bungalow into sauna and studio and construction of associated energy shed and store; demolition of two bungalows (Penolva and North Watch) and construction of replacement single storey dwelling and construction of associated energy shed and store; demolition of chalet (Eastern Watch) and construction of replacement single storey dwelling; demolition of two chalets (Artists Chalets) and construction of new single storey dwelling; construction of two single storey staff accommodation units; and associated landscape works.

You are being consulted on this application as you may wish to make comments before a decision is made. Should you wish to make any comments on this application, please complete the response form below and return to planning@scilly.gov.uk by Monday 1st September 2025.

Comments:

Thank you for consulting us on this application to demolish Borough Farmhouse, a dwelling with its origins in the early to mid- 19th century, and to redevelop the area surrounding it.

We have consulted the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record (HER) and the supporting information including the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) (Charles Johns Report No 2025/8, 26th June 2025).

As the HIA explains, the settlement at Borough originates to the medieval period (MCO30203), the name referring to the nearby Early Bronze Age barrow (MCO30196). A possible additional barrow (MCO30206) has been identified 50m to the northeast, close to the bungalows Northern Watch and Penolva.

Further evidence for prehistoric activity has been recorded at Borough, including a stone tool (MCO30197) and the upper part of a rotary quern (MCO30198), the latter suggesting Late Iron Age/Romano-British settlement in the immediate area.

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Although parts of the site have been built on, much of it has not, and there is the potential for buried archaeological features and finds dating to the later prehistoric and medieval periods which could enhance our understanding of the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall and SW Britain at this time.

The proposed scheme involves the demolition of the bungalows, Northern Watch and Penolva, and the construction of a new building on their footprint but also extending towards the barrow MCO30196. It is also proposed to cut a new road to the south of the barrow and a path to its north (albeit also included within the footprint of a small shed). Both new access routes are positioned close to the recorded outer edge of the barrow mound. Care will need to be taken in the construction phase that the barrow (and the possible barrow nearer to Penolva and Northern watch) are protected, as Section 6.1 of the HIA puts forward as part of the proposed mitigation strategy.

Within the existing gardens and lawns to the east of the barrow, two units of staff housing are proposed. At the eastern edge of the site, the two chalets will be replaced with a larger single building which will also extend into the garden area and the footprint of Eastern Watch extended to the north. This area is at the core of the Borough settlement as recorded on Spence's 1792 chart (see Fig 9 of the HIA).

At the northern edge of the site, it is proposed to develop a large dwelling, the relocated 'Borough farmhouse', with parking, access, new services and a small energy shed.

The scheme includes the demolition of the existing Borough farmhouse. Although the HIA considers the dwelling it does not adequately assess its heritage values and its significance in relation to its contribution to the Conservation Area. Looking online (<https://www.tresco.co.uk/staying/borough-farmhouse>) it is clear that the interior has been cleaned up but it is likely that historic fabric is hidden behind the modern finishes. Analysis of the front elevation from the photographs in the HIA and online and the existing plan show a greatly altered building but one that retains historic character and a high degree of authenticity and legibility. It is disappointing then that the building is not being proposed for alteration and enhancement but demolition.

As the HIA explains, by 1841 there were 10 dwellings at Borough, substantially more than indicated on Spence's chart of 1792 so it is likely that Borough farmhouse dates to pre-1841 and could either be a traditional Scillonian cottage which was greatly extended and altered, or, a dwelling built in the 1830s after the Smiths took on the lease for the islands. And while the HIA notes that the dwelling was badly damaged by fire in the 1920s or 1930s it makes no attempt to assess its actual visible fabric.

In this respect, we advise that the LPA consults its Historic Environment conservation advisor as the islands are a Conservation Area and the dwelling is, in our opinion, a non-designated heritage asset, the significance and weighting of which needs to be better understood by the LPA to inform a balanced planning decision (as per Paragraphs 216 and 220 of the NPPF).

RECOMMENDATION

For the reasons outlined above, if, in the balance of planning, the application is granted consent we recommend the following three conditions -

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HISTORIC BUILDING and ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING TO BOROUGH FARMHOUSE

An historic building record and archaeological monitoring and recording should be carried out prior to, and during, the demolition of Borough farmhouse. This work should be undertaken by a suitably qualified organisation or individual, and to the guidance provided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) and where relevant, Historic England.

Historic building recording should be undertaken to Level 3 as defined by Historic England's (2016) guidance – 'Understanding Historic Buildings - A Guide to Good Recording Practice'. Recording should include digital archive-quality photography, analysis of the building fabric, the annotation of elevation and plans combined with the results of documentary research and map regression.

Following the removal of modern finishes, a watching brief should be carried out on the building as the historic fabric is revealed, and the results incorporated into a single report which explains the development and history of Borough farmhouse.

For the above reasons, any consent issued should carry the condition as worded below of sections A-C inclusive (please do not split into separate Conditions or treat separately), which includes words recommended by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), as follows:

A) No demolition of Borough Farmhouse shall take place until a project design\ Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological and historic building recording has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions, and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme for post investigation assessment
3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation

B) No demolition of Borough Farmhouse shall take place other than in accordance with the project design/Written Scheme of Investigation approved under (A).

C) The archaeological and historic building recording condition will only be discharged when all elements of the WSI including on site works, analysis, report, publication (where applicable) and archive work has been completed, and a final report has been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority.

This is in accordance with the provisions of NPPF (2024) Chapter 16, paragraph 218 and the Isles of Scilly Local Plan policy OE7.

A pre-commencement condition is necessary in this instance due to the need to ensure that an approved methodology of historic building and archaeological investigation and recording is in place before physical works commence on site.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Because of the potential for buried archaeological features within the application site, archaeological monitoring and recording should be carried out during the early stages of groundworks, undertaken by a suitably qualified organisation or individual, and to the guidance provided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) and where relevant, Historic England.

This should take the form of a combination of strip, map and sample (on the footprint of the new buildings where they extend beyond that of the existing buildings, new access paths and tracks) and targeted watching briefs on other elements such as services.

Therefore, any consent issued should carry the condition as worded below of sections A-D inclusive (please do not split into separate Conditions or treat separately), which includes words recommended by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), as follows:

- A) No development or demolition of the existing buildings on site shall take place until a project design\ Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological recording has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions, and:
 - 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
 - 2. The programme for post investigation assessment
 - 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
 - 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 - 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 - 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation
- B) No development or development shall take place other than in accordance with the project design/Written Scheme of Investigation approved under (A).
- C) The new dwellings shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.
- D) The archaeological monitoring and recording condition will only be discharged when all elements of the WSI including on site works, analysis, report, publication (where applicable) and archive work has been completed, and a final report has been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority.

This is in accordance with the provisions of NPPF (2024) Chapter 16, paragraph 218 and the Isles of Scilly Local Plan policy OE7.

A pre-commencement condition is necessary in this instance due to the need to ensure that an approved methodology of historic building and archaeological investigation and recording is in place before physical works commence on site.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PROTECTING THE BARROWS DURING CONSTRUCTION

We advise the following condition to ensure that the barrows MCO30196 and MCO30206 are protected during the construction phase of the development.

No development or demolition shall take place until an archaeological management plan is submitted to, and approved, by the Local Planning Authority. The plan should provide the mitigation strategy during the demolition and construction phase of the development to ensure that the barrows MCO30196 and MCO30206 are protected.

A pre-commencement condition is necessary in this instance due to the need to ensure that the archaeological management plan is in place before physical works commence on site.

Name: Peter Dudley, Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Date: 29/08/2025