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Dear Mr Adams

**Preapplication advice: St Just in Roseland Community Land Trust**

Thank you for consulting the Cornwall AONB Unit on your scheme to develop the site at St Mawes for affordable housing.

I viewed the site last week and have the following comments to make.

The site is a sloping site comprising two fields on the north-western edge of St Mawes. The site slopes towards the estuary, more steeply closer to the existing housing which forms the settlement edge. Further north, the land levels off and plateaus.

The site is adjacent to the main A3078 coming into the village. On the opposite side of the road housing extends a little further north than the proposed development site.

The proposal is for approximately 14 units and we have a rough sketch of layout, which is not to scale. There are no designs or elevations at this stage.

The rough layout plan shows a new road access into the larger of the two fields and the development arranged around the road, with a turning circle at the end.

The Cornwall Landscape Character Assessment Places the site directly at the interface between two character areas. CA13 - Fal Ria, Truro and Falmouth and CA40 Gerrans, Veryan and Mevagissey Bays. The settlement of St Mawes is a typical

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settlement of CA13 and the largest on the Roseland side of the Estuary. The settlement pattern of CA40 is sparse inland. The objective must be to preserve the character of St Mawes as a settlement associated with the River Fal and not allow settlement to spill into the adjacent character area.

This change in character due to topography across the site is reflected in the Roseland Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Character Assessment, which shows the southern, smaller field as within the settlement character. It then splits the larger field into 'steep sided valley' and 'intermediate sloping ground' character types.

In terms of visual impact, there is a large variation in impact across the site with impact rising in magnitude the further away from the settlement edge you go up the hill and onto the plateau.

In conclusion I would advise that some of the site is able to be developed without significant harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but I would suggest that a larger scheme incorporating the whole of the larger field is not appropriate from either a character or a visual impact perspective. Using the Roseland Character Assessment as a guide, I would suggest that it would be appropriate to achieve development on the small field, which falls within the 'settlement' character and also within the 'steeply sloping' character type. Development on the intermediate sloping ground should be limited.

I would suggest altering the layout of the development to have the houses hugging the bottom of the slope against the existing settlement boundary and the access road placed to the north of the housing. This would mitigate the impact of the development up the slope. Implementing this may mean a reduction in the overall number of houses. This would be in line with the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan Policy GP2 (i) and would balance the local requirements for affordable as set down in Policy 16 of the RNP and the direction to conserve and enhance the landscape set out in RNP Policy 12.

Further visual mitigation can be achieved via further tree planting to the south and the north of the road. This would leave scope for a community green space north of the road to serve this new community. Since the field is currently an arable monoculture there is considerable scope to build in biodiversity benefits through the planting of native broadleaved trees, species rich grassland and nectar rich planting.

Taking the suggested approach would be policy compliant with the approach to the delivery of housing set down in Policy 3 of the Cornwall Local Plan which requires development outside the major settlements to achieve housing via the small scale 'rounding off' of housing at the settlement edge and not to extend housing into the countryside and that development in the AONB for housing will be supported where it can be shown there are not other policy conflicts, for example with Policy 23 of the Local Plan.

Depending on the final size of the scheme this development could be considered to be rounding off of the settlement edge. If larger, then there would be cause to define this as a rural exception site. The starting point for levels of affordable housing within a rural exception site is 100% affordable, which in any case would be complimentary to the aims of the St Just in Roseland Community Land Trust.

This advice does come with a really heavy caveat, due to the lack of detailed information on the scheme over and about a layout sketch which is not to scale. We cannot comment on matters of design at this stage for obvious reasons. We would like to continue the conversation with you with regards to this scheme as it does offer the opportunity to demonstrate how affordable housing can be delivered in AONB settlement in a way which is consistent with the aims of the protected landscape.

This advice is confidential to you and we will not share it. You are of course welcome to share it with others and Cornwall Council

If you have any questions or queries with regard to this advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Colette Beckham  
Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager

## **Annex 1      Relevant Cornwall AONB Management Plan Policies**

*MD3 Promote appropriate green infrastructure within built development, in line with Cornwall Council's adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy and also ensure effective management of water run off via sustainable drainage schemes and permeable surfacing.*

*MD5 Support small scale developments that enable the identified needs of local people to be met, in terms of affordable housing, employment and gypsy/ traveller sites. Development should be in sustainable locations with good access to services where landscape capacity and opportunity to enhance the protected landscape can be demonstrated.*

*MD9 Any necessary development in or within the setting of the AONB will be high quality sustainable development that:*

- is appropriately located, of an appropriate scale and addresses landscape sensitivity and capacity;*
- is compatible with the distinctive character of the location described by the Landscape Character Assessment, with particular regard to the setting of settlements and the rural landscape;*
- does not compromise the special qualities and characteristics of the*

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*AONB designation as outlined in the Statement of Significance for each local section and relevant character assessments;*

- maintains semi-natural corridors;*
- promotes the conservation of the historic environment as a whole and in particular those designated heritage assets and their setting; including the Conservation Areas and World Heritage Site;*
- is designed to respect quality of place in the use of distinctive local building styles and materials, dark skies and tranquillity; and*
- protects trees, other important landscape features and semi natural habitats in order that it can contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the protected landscape.*

*Particular care should be taken to ensure that development outside the AONB does not harm the natural beauty, character and special qualities of the AONB and/ or its setting or otherwise prejudice the achievement of the AONB purposes.*

*MD13 Built development should provide gains for biodiversity, promoting habitat retention, creation and enhancement; and species protection in line with BS 42020:2013, Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development and the Cornwall Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document.*