



case study

historic environment



Objective One is
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The Objective One Partnership
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

CHARK FARM COUNTRY HOLIDAYS

Chark Farm

Redmoor

Cornwall

www.charkcountryholidays.co.uk

the project

Chark Country Farm Holidays is a farm diversification project which has secured the reuse and long term economic viability of a group of four redundant vernacular farm buildings by successfully converting them to holiday units. The accommodation created has achieved 4 Stars rating from the English Tourism Council and one fully-accessible unit has been awarded 'Mobility 3' status under the National Accessible Scheme.

The Programme has invested £78,995 from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) in the project which has a total cost of £315,820.

Traditional farm buildings are a key feature of Cornwall's rural landscape both visually and economically. As an environmental asset they provide a vital economic resource for the future diversification of the farming industry and for wider regeneration initiatives. As visible landscape features they encapsulate the history of Cornwall's agricultural past and help define the character of the modern Cornish countryside. In fact historic farm buildings are vital in creating local identity and sense-of-place, thus reinforcing the quality of the Cornish landscape which is recognised as a major contributor to the Cornish economy.

sustaining the historic environment

To protect and improve the environment

A clear understanding of the buildings and their character was used to guide the design process and ensure that each conversion was adapted to the farm building rather than unnecessarily changing or extending the structures to suit their new use.

This informed approach means that unbroken rooflines have been retained and existing openings used to provide light and access. New openings have been kept to a minimum and their benefits maximised. Internal divisions too have been kept to the minimum with each barn retaining a largely open plan with original vernacular features left exposed where possible.



Care has been taken to use appropriate materials and vernacular building techniques. For example lime mortar has been used wherever possible and the roof of each farm building has been re-laid with traditional scantle slating. By using traditional finishes, the buildings at Chark Farm retain a variety of colour and texture which have been successfully used to reinforce their group character. The setting of the buildings has also been carefully considered, and though subdivided to provide parking and amenity space the farmyard still retains its common group identity.

As a result of this approach to design at Chark Farm, four redundant farm buildings have been successfully converted and are able to serve a new purpose whilst retaining their historic integrity and local distinctiveness.

To promote the use of natural resources

Accommodation has been provided by converting four redundant buildings, giving each a new lease of life and economic future without the need for new build. The use of recycled materials such as Rag slate and locally quarried stone has made a significant impact on the aesthetic quality of the buildings and helped reinforce local distinctiveness, a key factor for the tourism industry.

The buildings have been insulated to a high thermal specification and their energy efficiency significantly improved without harming their character or



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appearance. This has resulted in very small running costs for the accommodation and a warm and comfortable atmosphere for guests.

To increase awareness of residents, businesses and visitors of the value and importance of the environment

Information about the historic environment at Chark Farm and the history of the converted farm buildings is given informally to visitors and photographs are available. It is planned to improve intellectual access to the historic environment interpretation materials and compile a history of the site.

Improved physical access to the farm buildings has been achieved as part of the project whilst retaining their character and historic integrity. Steps and other barriers have been kept to a minimum; entrances have been created using the original wide openings with bespoke joinery, and internal open plans have been retained. One single-storey barn has been converted into a fully wheelchair accessible unit, and has attained 'Mobility 3' status under the National Accessibility Scheme. The project has provided dignified access to four farm buildings and demonstrates how the needs of the Disability Discrimination Act and those of building conservation can be balanced.

the economic benefits of sustaining the historic environment

Chark Farm demonstrates the value of making long term physical improvements and securing the future economic use of redundant farm buildings.

A light hand in the conversions has been achieved without the irrevocable loss of historic character. As a result a high quality environment has been created that reinforces local distinctiveness and attracts additional customers to the business.

The now converted buildings have created an opportunity to service a broader tourism market and helped the owners diversify their business and secure the long term future of the farm.

lessons learnt

Jenny Littleton, owner of Chark Farm, said:

"It is a wonderful thing to have converted the barns as the buildings would otherwise have been left to crumble. Converting our old granite barns into holiday



accommodation seemed like the ideal use of our resources.

"The quality [of the conversions] exceeds visitor's expectations which is great.

"We used lime mortar because of its aesthetic value and it made economic sense."

Here are some comments from visitors:

"A wonderful low impact holiday! The farm and cottages work so well together, the recycled stone in the walls, the old slates on the roof, and being so close to our eggs for breakfast: all a refreshing change."

For more information about how you can help sustain the historic environment in your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.