STRIDE TREGLOWN
TOWN PLANNING

# Planning Design & Access Statement (Incl. Heritage Statement)

St. Mary's Fire Station, Isles of Scilly

Hitachi Europe Ltd and the Council of the Isles of Scilly

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| **Stride Treglown job no.** | **151838** |
| **Prepared by** | **Ed Flood** |
| **Checked by** | **Tom Mills** |
| **Date** | **29/05/18** |
| **Revision** | **-** |

## Revisions

| Revision | Description |
|---|---|
| - | DRAFT |

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

1.1.1 This report has been prepared by Stride Treglown who have been appointed by Hitachi Europe Ltd, in partnership with Currie & Brown and the Council of the Isles of Scilly to provide planning consultancy services for the installation of 16 no. solar PV panels to the roof of the St. Mary's fire station, Isles of Scilly.

1.1.2 The proposed development forms part of the Smart Islands Energy Programme which has been set up sustainably and affordably tackle some of the Isles of Scilly's main infrastructure and utility issues, whilst providing a model for how other communities can profit from a rapid transition from being carbon intensive to having a low carbon footprint.

1.1.3 By implementing a set of interconnecting projects, the Smart Islands programme aims to cut energy bills by 40%, meet 40% of energy demand through renewable power, and see electric and low carbon cars make up 40% of vehicles.

1.1.4 The Smart Islands project, led by Hitachi Europe Ltd, and supported by the European Regional Development Fund, is the first project to be delivered by the Smart Islands Partnership. The founding members of the Smart Islands Partnership are the Council of the Isles of Scilly, Duchy of Cornwall, Hitachi Europe Ltd, the Island's Partnership and the Tresco Estate.

1.1.5 This application, for full planning permission, forms part of a suite of proposals for the installation of roof top and ground mounted solar PVs [Photovoltaic] at locations across the island of St Mary's. These locations include the roof of the St Mary's airport terminal and a small parcel of land adjacent to the airport terminal, both of which are the subject of two separate applications for full planning permission.

1.1.6 It is the purpose of this Planning, Design and Access Statement to provide an overview of the site and its context, identify the relevant planning framework, provide a description of the proposed development and assess the key planning considerations.

# 2. Site Appraisal

## 2.1. Site Location and Description

2.1.1 St. Mary's fire station is located within Hugh Town, the largest settlement on the Isles of Scilly, and is accessed via a lane connecting to Telegraph Road, to the north, which connects Hugh Town with areas elsewhere on the Island of St Mary's.


**Image 1: Image indicating location of St. Mary's Fire Station**

2.1.2 The fire station itself is a steel framed unit with steel shutter doors and profiled steel roof cladding. It contains sufficient space to house 3 wagons.

**Image 2: Front elevation of St Mary's fire station**

2.1.3 The Island of St Mary's is designated as a conservation area and as such particular regard will need to be had towards preserving the historic interest of the area. There are 3 listed buildings located within 200 metres of the fire station, each located to the south west towards Hugh Town.

2.1.4 The island is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB designation recognises that people are an important part of the landscape, ensuring that's its resources are protected, managed and capable of evolving in a sustainable way.

2.1.5 The immediate surroundings of the fire station consist of light industrial units and warehouse buildings as presented in the image below.

**Image 3: Image indicating industrial nature of immediate surroundings**

2.1.6 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 meaning that there is the lowest possible risk of flooding. For this reason, no Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the application.

# 3. Planning Policy Context

## 3.1. National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] (March 2012)

3.1.1 The NPPF centres on a *"presumption in favour of sustainable development". This is seen as key to both "plan making" and "decision talking"*.

3.1.2 With regards to plan making, local planning authorities [LPAs] should *"positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area" and "meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change unless material considerations indicate otherwise".*

3.1.3 With regards to decision making, LPAs should focus *on "approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay"* or *"where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise".*

3.1.4 Paragraph 17 sets out 12 core planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. Planning should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourage the use of renewable resources which is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

3.1.5 Paragraphs 97 and 98 of the NPPF state that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local authorities should have a "*positive strategy*" to promote energy from renewable sources. Furthermore it states that policies should be designed to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts of proposals are addressed.

3.1.6 Section 10 supports energy efficiency and low carbon buildings. Section 11 requires that developments minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible.

3.1.7 In terms of conservation and the historic environment, Section 12 sets out guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 28 states that *"in determining applications, local authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contributions made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance".*

3.1.8 Paragraph 129 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by a proposal. This assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact of the proposed development on the heritage asset to minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

3.1.9 In determining applications, local authorities should consider the following in accordance with paragraph 131 of the Framework;

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

3.1.10 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 132 requires great weight to be afforded to the asset's conservation. Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

3.1.11 Finally, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 134 states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including its optimal viable use.

## 3.2. National Planning Practice Guidance

3.2.1 National Planning Practice Guidance was issued in March 2014 and effectively replaced the majority of Government Circulars, which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning. The following items are relevant to the proposed development;

**Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 5-012-20140306** provides guidance on the particular planning considerations that relate to solar PV technologies. Particular importance is placed on the effective siting of installations to collect the most energy from the sun, and the importance of preserving Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other designated areas. The colour and appearance of the modules is also an important planning consideration.

**Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 5-001-20140306** notes the importance of planning for a renewable and low carbon energy footprint. Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses.

## 3.3. UK Renewable Roadmap

3.3.1 The UK Department of Energy and Climate Change set out a 'UK renewable Roadmap' promoting a steer towards a reduction in dependence on fossil fuels and provide a far greater focus on renewable energy solutions. Referring to paragraph 2.48 it states that "*the Government believes that solar PV has the potential to form a significant part of the UK's renewable energy generation mix*".

3.3.2 It moves on to state that "*solar PV benefits from being easy to install on domestic and commercial buildings, and on the ground. With 82% public support it has a role in connecting individuals, communities and businesses with future development of renewable energy and the transition to a low carbon economy*".

## 3.4. The Local Development Plan

3.4.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

3.4.2 The development plan for the Isles of Scilly currently comprises the Isles of Scilly Local Plan (2005).

## 3.5. Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2005

3.5.1 The Isles of Scilly Local Plan – 2020 Vision was adopted in November 2005. The 2005 Local Plan provides a clear spatial planning strategy for the islands in a concise and precise manner, reflecting its relatively small population and geographic area. The key policies relevant to the proposals are presented below.

3.5.2 **Policy 1 – Environmental Protection** aims to protect and respect the recognised quality of the islands natural, archaeological, historic and built environment through a number of criteria. Applications for development will be permitted where they;

- Conserve or enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the AONB and protect the unspoilt character and good appearance of the Heritage Coast;
- Preserve nationally important archaeological remains and their settings;
- Preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and preserve the architectural or historic interest of all listed buildings, including their features and settings;
- Safeguard the integrity and nature conservation objectives of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar Sites and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Protect a statutorily-protected plant or animal species and the wildlife, geological and geomorphological interest and features of designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and locally important biodiversity habitats, species and landscape features; and

- Secure the future character, appearance and setting of any Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest included in the English Heritage Register.

3.5.3 **Policy 2 – Sustainable Development** aims to ensure the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings for the economic, social and environmental benefit of the islands, taking into account any environmental designations set out in Policy 1. Policy 2 also aims to utilise natural resources efficiently through the use of renewable sources of energy generation.

3.5.4 **Policy 6 – Infrastructure for Sustainable Communities** supports development proposals, in keeping with the particular scale and character of the islands, where they are for renewable energy projects or where they facilitate improvements to the electricity supply network.

## 3.6. Isles of Scilly Sustainable Energy Strategy 2007

3.6.1 The Isles of Scilly Sustainable Energy Strategy was adopted in November 2007 and aims to create a sustainable energy future for the islands. It takes a holistic approach to meeting the island's energy needs, integrating actions designed to minimise energy demand, increase energy efficiency, and promote the use of renewable energy sources.

3.6.2 The driving force of the document is the importance of conserving, and where possible enhancing, the character and quality of the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of the islands. The strategy's emphasis is on seeking to meet the energy needs of the islands without impacting on their character and distinctiveness.

## 3.7. The Isles of Scilly Design Guide 2006

3.7.1 The Isles of Scilly Design Guide was approved in 2006 to complement the Local Plan and the AONB Management Plan. It offers clear and practical guidance in order to achieve high quality and sustainable design and ensure the special character of Scilly is retained and where possible enhanced.

3.7.2 The Guide states, *"The introduction of renewable energy in the form of active solar technology is encouraged. Active solar technology can be divided into: Photovoltaic (PV) and Solar Water Heating (SWH). Both technologies use roof mounted equipment to collect radiation from the sun. PV is converted into electricity, SWH is converted into hot water. PV can be used as a building material. It can be integrated into the roof or facade through the use of solar shingles, glass laminators or most appropriate for the islands - solar slates. SWH panels are mounted on the roof. For best performance they need to be mounted at an angle of 20-40 degrees, depending on latitude and oriented due south".*

## 3.8. Isles of Scilly AONB Management Plan 2015-2020

3.8.1 The Isles of Scilly AONB Management Plan recognises that there are several major community and infrastructural development projects proposed for the islands, including community and domestic renewable energy installations. The AONB partnership confirms its role in steering and supporting actions at a local level to ensure that renewable energy developments conserve and enhance the AONB landscape, whilst at the same time delivering benefits to the local community and supporting planning to take into account climate change.

## 3.9. Draft Local Plan 2015-2030

3.9.1 In June 2015 the Local Planning Authority began a review of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan. The new Local Plan is intended to plan strategically for the period 2015-2030. A second round of public consultation will take place in February and March 2018, which will consult on the Draft Local Plan 2015-2030 and 5 consultation options.

3.9.2 **Emerging policy SS8 – 'Renewable Energy Developments'** is designed to promote renewable and low carbon energy schemes, whilst ensuring that adverse effects are satisfactorily addressed, including any cumulative landscape and visual impacts. Renewable energy proposals will be supported where they do not compromise the cultural heritage or historic environment of the islands and where there would be no significant adverse effects on airport radar, air traffic control and telecommunications systems.

3.9.3 A number of other emerging policies are relevant to the proposed development, including;

3.9.4 **Policy OE1 – 'Landscape Character'**. Proposals for new development will only be permitted where they would not cause significant harm to the character, quality, distinctiveness or sensitivity of the landscape, or to important features or views, or other perceptual qualities such as tranquillity and dark skies, unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impacts. Development proposals should be informed by the Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study.

3.9.5 **Policy OE3 – 'Development affecting Heritage'**. Development proposals must conserve and enhance the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting, especially those positive elements identified in any appraisal.

3.9.6 **Policy OE2 – 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity'** aims to conserve, and where possible restore and/or provide net gains to biodiversity and geodiversity.

3.9.7 The Council aims to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State by July-August 2018 with examination of the plan expected in Autumn 2018.

3.9.8 It is envisaged that the existing adopted Isles of Scilly Sustainable Energy Strategy will continue to inform the development strategy for the islands moving forwards.

## 3.10. Draft Sustainability Appraisal 2015-2030

3.10.1 The draft sustainability appraisal provides a comprehensive assessment of the sustainability attributes of the emerging local plan. The appraisal recognises that policies can be created to positively promote the use of renewable energy. A number of objectives are set out, one of which is to increase the renewable energy capacity of the islands in order to help achieve their aspirations for a low carbon future.

# 4. Pre-application advice

4.1.1 Pre-application advice was received from the Council of the Isles of Scilly on April 5th 2018. The Council's opinion was provided with respect to the proposals for roof mounted solar PV at the fire station, airport terminal and nos 1 and 2 Trinity Cottages, as well as the proposed solar garden to the north west of the airport terminal. The pre-application advice is appended to this report in Appendix A.

4.1.2 In summary, the report concluded that the proposed installation of 16 no. solar panels to the roof of the fire station would be acceptable providing that considerable weight is afforded to the visual impact of the proposals on the conservation area and any affected designated heritage assets.

# 5. Design & Access

## 5.1. Proposed works

5.1.1 This application for full planning permission is accompanied by an Isles of Scilly Smart Energy Islands Project document titled “St. Mary’s Fire Station”. The document provides details relating to locations and size of the solar PV panels as well as the generation capacity of the installation.

5.1.2 In short, the proposed installation to the roof of the fire station would consist of two strings of 16 x 300Wp photovoltaic panels with a potential generation capacity of 9.6kW. The proposed layout of the solar panels is as indicated on the image below.

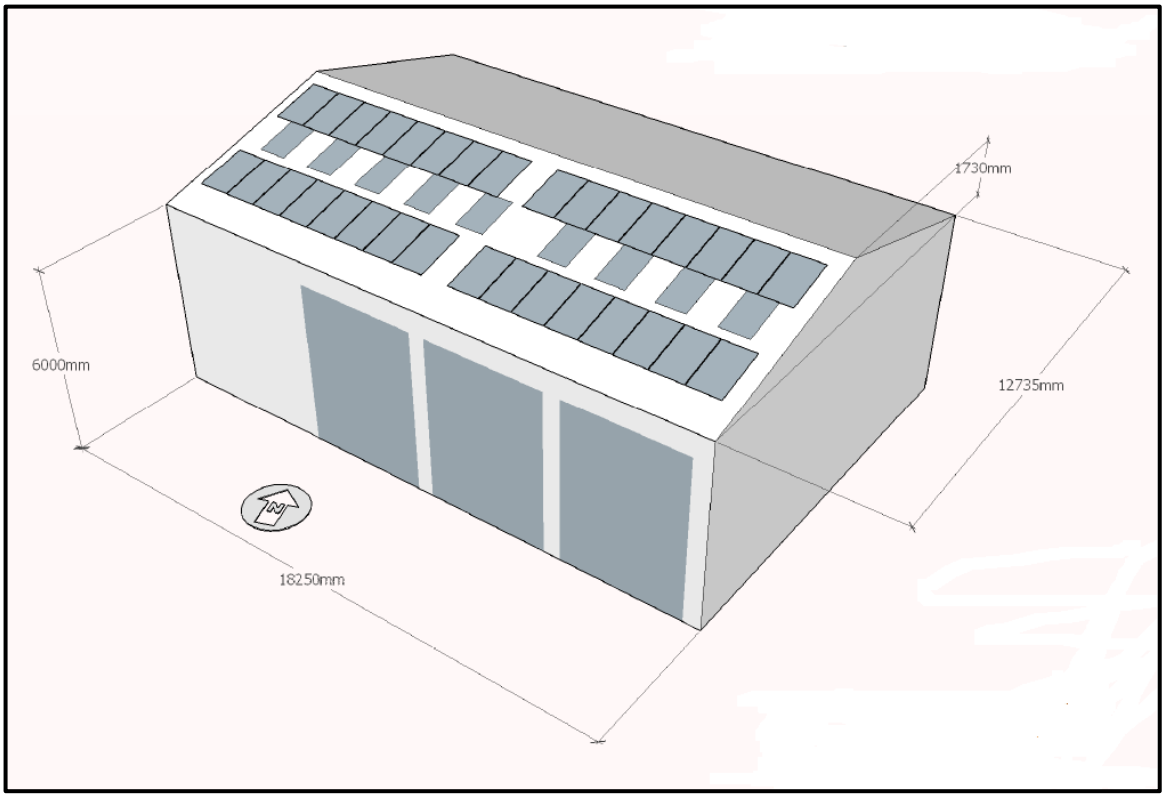


**Image 4: Image indicating proposed layout of solar PV panels**

## 5.2. Use and Amount

5.2.1 The proposed rooftop solar PV panels would utilise the existing building without impacting upon its use as a fire station. The panels will be located on the south facing side of the pitched roof in order to maximise their generation efficiency. No panels are proposed to the north facing side of the pitched roof.

## 5.3. Layout

5.3.1 Two strings of 16 x 300Wp panels will be arranged in four rows running from east to west. The panels will not be replacing any part of the roof but will instead be fixed over it, and at the end of life can be removed, leaving the original roof intact.

## 5.4. Scale

5.4.1 The scale of development on site has been determined by the equipment necessary to efficiently generate renewable energy. The panels will be fixed to the roof of the fire station which measures 6 metres to eaves height and 7.73 metres to ridge height.

5.4.2 The principle elevation of the fire station itself is enclosed and surrounded by other light industrial units, accessed from Telegraph Road. Facing inwards, towards the enclosure, the solar panels would only be visible from neighbouring light industrial units and would not detract from the overall special character of the surrounding conservation area.

## 5.5. Landscaping

5.5.1 No alterations to landscaping are proposed.

## 5.6. Appearance

5.6.1 The proposed solar PV panels would be located on the roof of the fire station as per the accompanying roof plan, to minimise the proposal's effect on the external appearance of the building.

5.6.2 The individual panels have a sleek black finish using non-reflective materials, covering approximately 80% of the roof area and not exceeding 50mm in depth as per the enclosed plans.

## 5.7. Access

5.7.1 For the purposes of installation, vehicular access to the fire station is from Telegraph Road to the north of the site. Measures will be put in place to ensure safety of roof operatives during installation, but steel shutter doors for fire engine access will need to remain clear at all times.

## 5.8. Maintenance

5.8.1 Maintaining solar PV panels should involve the performance of safe, preventative and corrective maintenance activities on low and high voltage electrical equipment, and the maintenance of the site's mechanical and civil elements. The life expectancy for both roof top and ground mount solar PV is between 25 and 30 years and good maintenance should increase component longevity and performance and maximise power generation.

# 6. Heritage Statement

6.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework, Para. 128 requires "*applicant(s) to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of the proposal on their significance".*

6.1.2 This Heritage Statement assesses the impact of the proposed rooftop solar installation at the fire station on the wider conservation area. The development comprises the installation of roof top solar panels to the roof of the St. Mary's fire station. There are no listed buildings in close proximity to the fire station, with the nearest being located approximately 180 metres to the south west of the building. However, consideration does need to be given to the potential impact of the proposed solar panels on the conservation area, which covers the entirety of the Isles of Scilly.

## 6.2. Significance of the Heritage Assets

### Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

6.2.1 There are no listed buildings located within the immediate vicinity of the fire station. There is, however, a cluster of listed buildings located approximately 180 metres to the south west of the building as indicated on the map overleaf. The nearest of which is the Grade II listed Church of St. Mary's, located approximately 180 metres to the south west.


**Image 5: Image indicating nearest listed buildings to site (blue circles)**

6.2.2 The proposed works comprise the installation of 16 no. solar panels to the roof of the fire station. As such, an analysis of impact of this upon nearby listed buildings is required. The buildings potentially affected are as follows:

- Church of St Mary's (Church Road)
- Wall and gateway to west of church of St Mary's (Church Road)
- Lead cistern to north of west door of the Church of St Mary's (Church Road)
- The Chaplaincy (Church Road)

- Gateway to west of The Chaplaincy (Church Road)
- Church of St Mary (Methodist) (Church Street)
- 1-10, Higher Strand

6.2.3 The Church of St Mary occupies a site on the north-western side of Church Road at the end of Church Street. The church's construction began in 1836 and was completed in 1838. The Church was designated as a Grade II listed building in February 1975.

**Image 6: St Mary's Church, Church Road**

6.2.4 The church contains a number of significant features, including the coursed granite and a stone-coped gabled slate roof. The list description further notes the chancel, nave and bell tower of historic merit. The windows that make up the entrance, the length of the nave, and the chancel are also noted as important features.

6.2.5 Other items that can be classed as ancillary to the Church of St Mary include the lead water cisterns (see Image 4) to north of the west door of the Church of St Mary's and the cistern to the south of the west door of the Church of St Mary's, both dated back to 1727. Originally located at Star Castle to the east of the island, the features provide an important insight into the history of the area.


**Image 7: Lead cisterns at the Church of St Mary's**

6.2.6 Additionally, the wall and gateway fronting the Church of St Mary (see Image 5), featuring coarsed and dressed granite wall with flat coping and the original wrought iron gates have been included for group value.

**Image 8: Gates at the front of St. Mary's Church**

6.2.7 To the south west of St Mary's Church (Church Road), lies The Chaplaincy (Rectory), which was built in circa 1830. Its notable features include: rendered granite, hipped slate roof, 4 window range, pilaster surround in between the 3rd and 4th bays, pilastered porch with 6 panelled door and a variety of sash windows (see Image 6).

**Image 9: The Chaplaincy and listed gateway**

6.2.8 Separately listed from The Chaplaincy is the gateway, leading to its west facing façade, which similarly to the Church of St Mary's gates, has been listed for inclusive value. It features most notably 2 dressed granite piers with pyramidal caps and a decorative wrought iron gate.

6.2.9 A few metres south east, opposite the Church of St Mary (Church Road), lies the Methodist Church of St Mary (Church Street). This church is constructed of similar materials and is of a similar style as indicated in Image 7.

**Image 10: St Mary's Methodist Church (Church Street)**

6.2.10 The Methodist Church presents square coarsed granite and has a slate roof, common features for the ecclesiastical building types in the area. Above the central tripartite lancet is an inscription, and above that a trefoil cast iron ventilator. The length of the façade fronting Church Street has 4 lancets.

6.2.11 Finally, facing the coast are a set of early/mid 19th Century terraced cottages (see Image 8). All are constructed of coursed granite rubble with gabled slate roofs. Individuality is created for each cottage by using differing styles of windows.

**Image 11: Cottages 1-10, High Strand**

### Conservation Area

6.2.12 The Isles of Scilly were first designated as a conservation area in 1975. In 2015, the Council of the Isles of Scilly published a Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Supplementary Planning Document) Draft, including an analysis of the most important buildings and areas of St Mary's.

6.2.13 The need to design the proposal in a way which preserves the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area is recognised. The Isles of Scilly Conservation Area Character Appraisal draft provides the following description for St Mary's;

> *"The main part of the island of St Mary's comprises an undulating interior landscape of comparatively large fields, wooded valleys and low lying marshy areas. There are some places on St Mary's from which the sea cannot be seen. The coastal strip is made up of exposed heaths, rocky coast with heathland and areas of sandy shore"*

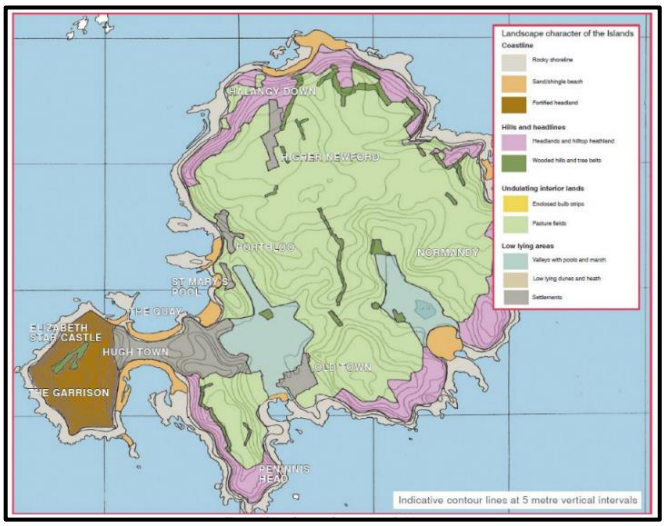


**Image 12: Landscape Character Map for St. Mary's**

6.2.14 St Mary's fire station is located within an area of light industrial buildings, enclosed by dense hedgerow to the east of the main settlement of Hugh Town. The settlement of Hugh Town is described in the Isles of Scilly Design Guide as follows;

*"Hugh Town is the only truly 'urban' settlement on the islands. The historic (mainly 18th and 19th Century) core extends from the ramparts and the batteries of the Garrison to the west, along Town Beach on the north side and Porthcressa Beach to Buzza Hill and Peninnis Head to the south. The isthmus upon which it is built is about 500 metres in length by about 150 metres in width. Within this small area there are a variety of townscapes. The historic town contains about 70% of the listed buildings on the Isles of Scilly. Any new development or redevelopment must be considered within this context"*

6.2.15 The image below illustrates the key views and vistas on St Mary's. One of the key views to be assessed as part of this Heritage Statement is the view from Hugh Town Harbour as well as from the Garrison to the west of the island. Both of these views are highlighted in pink below.

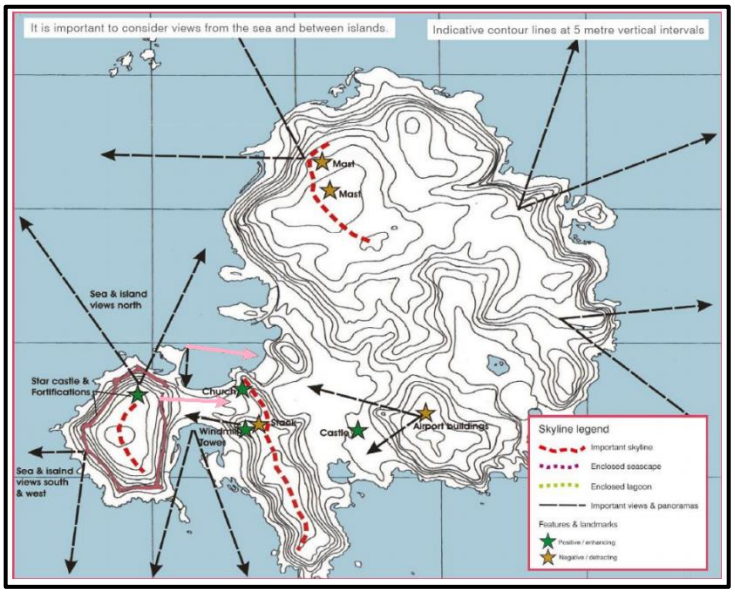


**Image 13: Image illustrating key views affecting the site (Pink)**

6.2.16 The draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal comments that the use of renewable energy will increase over time and it is important that any such measures are sensitive to the character of the Conservation Area.

## 6.3. Impact Assessment

### Introduction

6.3.1 The following issues need to be considered in assessing the impact on the heritage significance of the listed buildings and the surrounding conservation area:

- Impact on the historic fabric of any listed buildings; and
- Impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

6.3.2 Each of these issues are addressed in turn below.

### Impact on listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments

6.3.3 No listed buildings are affected by the proposed development. Due to natural screening and the surrounding built environment, there is little intervisibility between the listed buildings identified within this Heritage Statement and the fire station.

6.3.4 In terms of the Grade I listed Garrison Wall to the west of the island, the proposed solar PV installation would have no impact. The setting of the Garrison Wall is already impacted in terms of views from the east by the houses immediately in front of the wall. Views westwards towards the fire station are broken up by a mixture of vegetation and residential dwellings. Together with distance and topography, it is considered that the impacts of the rooftop solar panels would be negligible.

### Impact on the Conservation Area

6.3.5 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest. The character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 of The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act).

6.3.6 Historic England advice and guidance is set out in two documents; 'Small Scale Solar Electric (Photovoltaics) Energy and Traditional Buildings' (English heritage 2010) and 'Microgeneration and the Historic Environment' (English Heritage 2012).

6.3.7 Historic England advises that it should be possible to install microgeneration equipment on many buildings and conservation areas, if they are carefully positioned. The principle considerations are that:

- Efforts should be made to minimise visual impact
- Equipment should not damage key views in, out or within the conservation area
- There should be no loss to the overall character or historic interest of the conservation area
- The local planning authority should consider the cumulative impacts of the installation of different types of equipment.

6.3.8 Intervisibility between the fire station and nearby heritage assets is blocked by existing hedgerow surrounding the industrial estate within which the building is located. There are also a number of intervening buildings, therefore the impacts of the proposed installation of rooftop solar panels are assessed as negligible, providing that a high quality, non-reflective finish to the PV panels is used.

## 6.4. Public benefits of the proposal

6.4.1 Whilst this statement has confirmed that there will be no impact on any heritage assets as a result of the proposed works, it is worth outlining the considerable public benefits of the proposals and the benefits they can bring to the conservation area.

6.4.2 The installation of the proposed solar PV panels to the roof of the fire station would be amongst the first steps in delivering significant public benefits by the Smart Islands Energy Programme. By the end of 2019, the project aims to deliver an islands-wide energy control system providing cheaper, reliable renewable power. The project also aims to provide support for community enterprise to share the benefits of cheaper electricity.

# 7. Planning Issues

7.1.1 It is considered that the main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows;

- The impacts of the proposed development on the setting of nearby heritage assets and the wider conservation area; and
- Landscape and visual impacts.

7.1.2 These issues are addressed in turn.

## 7.2. Heritage Impacts

7.2.1 The impacts of the proposed development on nearby heritage assets and surrounding conservation area are assessed in the Heritage Statement previously in this document.

7.2.2 The Heritage Statement concludes that the installation of solar PV panels to the roof of the fire station will deliver substantial public benefits in terms of new renewable energy generation on the island whilst having no detrimental impacts on the islands heritage assets.

## 7.3. Landscape and Visual Impacts

7.3.1 The Sustainable Energy Strategy for the Isles of Scilly (2007) emphasises the importance of conserving, and where possible enhancing, the character and quality of the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of the islands.

7.3.2 The proposed solar PV panels will be located on the roof of the fire station and would not impact upon key characteristics such as boundary hedgerow and trees. Located within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area and AONB, the proposed development will need to have minimal impact on views from within these designated areas.

7.3.3 The fire station building itself is of low architectural merit and is located within an area to the east of Hugh Town prevalent with light industrial units. The building is constructed of corrugated steel with a low pitched roof meaning that the proposed solar panels would be appropriately sited with limited visibility from street level.

7.3.4 Enclosed by trees and vegetation, the area is well screened from nearby heritage assets, including the Church of St Mary's, 180 metres to the south west. The intervening built environment provides further screening from heritage assets.

7.3.5 The benign appearance of the solar panels would not detract from the special qualities of the surrounding AONB. It is considered that the proposed rooftop solar installation would make good use of existing buildings without impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area.

# 8. Summary and Conclusions

8.1.1 The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to support the transition to a low carbon future, encouraging the re-use of existing resources and promoting the use of renewable energy schemes. Indeed the transition to a low carbon future and the use of renewable energy forms one of the 12 core planning principles of the NPPF, detailed in Paragraph 17.

8.1.2 Paragraphs 97 and 98 of the NPPF state that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local authorities should have a 'positive strategy' to promote energy from renewable sources. Furthermore, it states that policies should be designed to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development whilst ensuring the adverse impacts of the proposal are addressed.

8.1.3 The design and access issues of the proposed rooftop solar installation, at the fire station, has been assessed. It is considered that the benign appearance of the panels and the degree of natural screening afforded to the site, that the proposals would not have an unacceptably adverse impact on the visual or amenity value of the surrounding environment.

8.1.4 In policy terms there is no conflict with either national or local planning policies. Indeed the proposed rooftop solar installation would represent good use of existing buildings with negligible impact upon the surrounding heritage assets and AONB.

# 9. Appendix A : Pre-application response

## Edward Flood

**From:** Walton Lisa <Lisa.Walton@scilly.gov.uk>
**Sent:** 05 April 2018 12:27
**To:** Edward Flood
**Cc:** Schild Russ; King Andrew; Dryden Craig
**Subject:** RE: Request for pre-application advice - Solar PV
**Attachments:** Heritage Impact - Solar PV (6.33 KB)

**Categories:** Filed by Newforma

Dear Ed

Unfortunately whilst there was wifi at St Agnes no one had the code. Apologies.

In relation to your enquiry then any application now would still be assessed under the 2005 Local Plan (policy 2) and the NPPF (para 7 Core Planning Principle). A review of the 2012 NPPF is currently out to consultation (see para 147-153) . Should you submit an application later in the year then greater weight will be given to the emerging policies of the new Local Plan 2015-2030: http://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/draft-local-plan-2015-2030/public-consultation-march-may-2018 (currently out to public consultation). This does contain specific policies on renewable energy and providing there is no adverse harm identified then RE installations would be supported. You can have a look at Policy SS8 in the above link. In both the current and the draft plan the principal of RE installations is considered acceptable. Clearly however considerable weight will be given to assessing the visual impact of any installation and the conservation area and any other affected designated heritage assets will need to be taken into account. I would certainly advise an Historic Impact Assessment is carried out to ensure the most appropriate/suitable locations are used for the installations (particularly on the Garrison) as well as the products that are less noticeable. The attached advice would be applicable to Trinity Cottages.

In terms of the airport – I would suggest you contact Russ Schild to see if there are any navigational issues associated with such an installation in close proximity to an airport (russ.schild@scilly.gov.uk). Unless you are digging significant foundations then there are unlikely to be particular impacts on designated heritage, but again this is a conservation area and aonb so it will be important to minimise the visual impact as much as possible.

A planning application would take 8 weeks, from receipt of a valid application, and would likely be determined at Full Council.

We would require the full completed application forms (either via the planning portal: https://1app.planningportal.co.uk/Form/StartPlanningApplication) or downloaded from the Council's website here: http://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning/make-planning-application/planning-application-forms (form no 04). The fee can be checked here: https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf and will depend on the scale of the proposal (£462 for sites note more than 5 hectares) – if applying through the Portal then it will advise on the fee based on the information you provide.

We would need OS based Scale Location (1:1250) and Site Plans (1:500) that do not breach copyright. You should draw a line around the site area in each case including any areas for maintenance, access and cabling etc) Guidance on Location and Site plans can be found here: https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/1app/maps_plans_and_planning_apps.pdf

We will need scale drawings and specifications of the proposed solar installations both in plan form and in profile this should show the precise location of installation, any equipment and the scale of the equipment.

We would need a Design and Access statement, which can include the heritage assessment, design and scale: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118111019/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/design-and-access-statements.pd

Please note than any views expressed are an informal officer opinion only and not a formal determination under the Town and Country Planning Act.

Regards
Lisa

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