



Historic England

Ms Lisa Walton

Direct Dial: 0117 9750699

Council of the Isles of Scilly

Town Hall

Our ref: PL00798997

The Parade

St Mary's

Isles of Scilly

TR21 0LW

3 June 2025

Dear Ms Walton

RE: EIA SCREENING, ST MARTINS, ISLES OF SCILLY

Thank you for consulting Historic England on this EIA Screening Opinion request.

An overview of relevant heritage on the Isles of Scilly

The Isles of Scilly contain a rich and deep historic environment that represents all periods of human activity from the prehistoric through to the relatively modern heritage of 20th century conflicts. It hosts a particularly dense palimpsest of archaeological sites and built heritage that includes many exceptionally well-preserved sites spread across all of the currently and formerly inhabited islands. This is reflected in the fact that Scilly has the highest concentration of Scheduled Monuments per square kilometre in



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England. This rich cultural heritage includes very rare and nationally important sites and monuments within the marine and inter-tidal zones, several of which are protected as Scheduled Monuments, reflecting the progressive inundation of the islands through geological processes and climate change over the millennia. The beaches, inter-tidal and shallow marine zones preserve, remarkably intact, elements of the prehistoric land surface of Scilly, including sites of Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age date.

The island of St Martins is well represented in terms of the various aspects of heritage described above, with several Scheduled Monuments, a raised potential for encountering undesignated archaeological sites & remains and a rich inter-tidal and marine zone that reflects the wider Scillonian picture of an inundated prehistoric landscape. Whilst it is ultimately for the local planning authority to determine whether the proposals represent EIA development, given the complexity of the historic environment on Scilly you may consider that the EIA model is an appropriate way to assess heritage impacts alongside all other potential environmental impacts.

Potential impacts

By comparing the proposed project boundary to the records available to Historic England it is apparent that the proposed works could have an impact within the setting of a number of Scheduled Monuments. Your authority should consider the high level of designation afforded to Scheduled Monuments, the great weight that should be applied to their conservation in the planning process - including their settings - and the potential impact of the proposed works upon those settings when determining whether an EIA is required.

In addition, the marine elements of the project have the potential to impact upon undesignated marine archaeological remains, which may comprise drowned former land surfaces with palaeoenvironmental potential and elements of maritime heritage. Historic England has a duty to advise on the conservation of the marine historic environment through the National Heritage Act 2002 and we are a statutory adviser to Marine Management Organisation in that respect.



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We also note the potential for the project to encounter undesignated terrestrial archaeological remains including human remains (A Medieval inhumation burial and midden has been found at Lower Town). The relative proximity of this find to the project works area presents a raised potential for further remains to be encountered. Undesignated archaeological remains are generally beyond the remit of Historic England and it is recommended that you seek the advice of your Authority's own archaeological advisers in respect of the assessment, evaluation and mitigation of undesignated heritage.

EIA decision

If you decide an EIA is required then we would expect it to contain an examination of the potential impacts upon all heritage assets likely to be affected, including designated heritage assets and their settings together with potential impacts on non-designated features of historic, architectural, archaeological or artistic interest, since these can also be of national importance and make an important contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of an area and its sense of place. This covers buildings, historic open spaces, historic features and the wider historic landscape including below-ground archaeology and marine archaeology and palaeoenvironmental potential.

We advise that the local authority's conservation and archaeology advisers are closely involved throughout the preparation of any Environmental Statement. They are best placed to advise on:

- local historic environment issues and priorities (including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record);
- how the proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment;
- the nature and design of any required mitigation measures and
- opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.



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If your Authority decides that an EIA is not required it is our view that, given the potential impacts upon the historic environment, an archaeological impact assessment is undertaken at an early stage in the planning process to enable informed advice to be provided on this scheme by Historic England and your own archaeological advisers.

Given the location of elements of the proposed project within the shoreline and inter-tidal zone, it is recommended that you seek the advice of the Marine Management Organisation as to whether a Marine Licence will be required in advance of the works, in addition to planning permission.

If you have any queries about the above or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Phil McMahon

Phil McMahon
Inspector of Ancient Monuments
phil.mcmahon@HistoricEngland.org.uk



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