

THE DAIRY CAFE, HIGHER STRAND, ST. MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

MAY 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Dairy Cafe is a 2 storey, flat roofed property in a very prominent position at the top of Higher Strand, overlooking Town Beach.

It is situated with a group of properties which were probably built in the mid sixties and are markedly different from the rest of the streetscape, which is predominantly granite cottages.

The building is an eyesore and has, for quite a number of years, been in a very poor state of repair. The property is rendered with a cream paint finish. Windows and doors are either timber or UPVC. The property has a very distinctive '60's' feel to it. This is mainly due to the landscape window orientation and the flat roof.

It has no redeemable qualities in its present condition.



EXISTING USE

The ground floor of the building has been run as a Cafe until very recently. There are 2 apartments on the upper floor, one of which is occupied by the owners / leaseholders, the other is a 1 bed holiday rental. The ground floor A3 accommodation is approximately 103sqm, 40sqm of which is ancillary storage space.

The property is leased from the Duchy with approximately 22 years remaining on the lease period.



PROPOSALS AND OBJECTIVES

The leaseholders, with the consent of the Duchy, hope to carry out extensive renovations to the property which will change the main business focus of the property from the cafe (now closed) to a holiday rental business with 2 rental apartments, together with ground floor owners accommodation and gallery / retail space. The leaseholders have produced a personal statement on the reasons for this change which is included as an addendum.



MATERIALS AND APPEARANCE

The fundamental change in character of this building will be the addition of a new pitched roof, covering the entire footprint of the main building. This will allow for the creation of a new living space to supplement the first floor bedrooms of the rear flat forming a 2 bedroom holiday rental apartment with outdoor amenity space overlooking Town Beach. This roof is pitched at 45° and will be finished in man made slate tiles. Exposed timber beams will create visual interest to the facade with the main elements of glazing set back behind new terraces.

The windows and door to the main elevation will be repositioned and resized in order to produce a clearer, more cohesive facade. The first floor windows will be removed and replaced with full height sliding doors, in powder coated aluminium, behind new glazed juliet balconies. This allows the existing first floor holiday rental apartment to take full advantage of the views over Town Beach. The existing first floor facade will then be clad in Western Red Cedar in a board and batten design. This detail will carry along each side facade to bridge the gap between the existing flat roof and the new pitched roof.

The ground floor doors will be replaced with new glazed timber doors. The retail zone will also have large timber security doors. These will act as a focal point for this section of the building. The glazed doors are set back and the front area can potentially be used for display.

A new access door to the right hand side of the retail zone will be very plain and coloured to match the render finish. This is to make it as unobtrusive as possible and to prevent confusion for customers to the retail zone.

Doors to the living accommodation will also be set back with large planters placed in front to allow for a level of privacy and to prevent confusion. These 'doors' will also have openable windows in the upper glazed sections.

Windows to the rear of the first floor will be repositioned and replaced with powder coated aluminium. new entrance doors will be in timber with glazed elements.

The flat roof to the left hand side of the main facade will be converted into a terrace area, accessed from the living room. This will have a glass balustrade.

The remaining rendered areas will be either re-rendered or patched depending on the current state of repair

SUSTAINABILITY

As part of the renovation works the property will be thermally upgraded in line with current building regulation requirements.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS

There should be no significant impact on the surrounding properties from this proposal. The roof pitch runs on a roughly North / South axis and afternoon and evening sunlight will be unaffected.

After consultation with the housing officers at Scilly Council, they are happy with the inclusion of high level windows to the SouthWest elevation. The ground floor windows will be inward opening and be above eyeline and can therefore be clear glazing. The first floor bathroom window will be tilt and turn inward opening and have obscured glazing

The oblique views towards town beach from School Cottage and Hillside will remain unaffected.

ACCESS

There will be no alterations to vehicular or pedestrian access to the property except for the inclusion of the new entrance door at ground level. The nature of the buildings location and specific levels do not allow for increased accessibility for wheelchair users, though the retail space will be fully accessible.

ADDENDUM - PERSONAL STATEMENT

As bullet points

- We decided to permanently close the café in December 2016 as it was trading at a loss and had been doing so for over 12 months.
- None of our efforts to effectively market, promote or robustly advertise the café through the IP, TIC, a Porthcressa Board, in a number of local publications and on Radio Scilly appeared to generate interest or increase footfall.
- Despite the café remaining open all year round, the revenue generated by regular locals during the winter was insufficient and unsustainable.
- We considered one of us taking external work in an effort to boost our finances, but it would have proved extremely difficult and stressful for the remaining member to manage all the tasks required to keep the café open single handed.
- We have ploughed our personal savings into the business and made many improvements, but this has failed to make any appreciable improvement to our takings in the café. It has also been necessary to pay for goods and freight on credit card which is something we were anxious to avoid.
- We have never taken a wage from the business, and this can no longer be sustained.
- Freight costs have crippled our finances, so too have the rising costs of electricity and business rates.
- Our location on the Strand is not conducive to a successful café or other retail business because:
 - a) the building is nestled within a fully residential area
 - b) the building is not visible from a reasonable distance which results in many members of the public being unaware of our existence.
 - c) we are too close to the town where people may already have taken refreshments prior to reaching us and therefore have no need to use us
 - d) we are not considered a "destination" café because we are not "en route" in the same way that Carn Vean, Kaffeehuis and Juliet's are (for example) and our facilities would never compare.
 - e) fierce competition has opened up on the Strand which is better placed and logically more likely to attract customers before they reach us.
- Two revenue streams have been lost to us since our taking on the business, namely: our DVD rental service was devastated by the installation of superfast broadband on the islands and also our evening takeaway pizza service has been decimated by competition which had not previously been in operation.
- We have been unsuccessful in all our attempts to recruit competent staff who are willing and able to stay beyond 6 weeks during the summer.
- We believe that closing the café has not be detrimental to the island as we have continued to operate the milk round and there are also two new cafe's opening up, namely Longstone Lodge & Café (now opened) and Strudl in Town. Both these new businesses have the potential to prosper and this would undoubtedly have an impact on our business if we remained open.
- We believe the building would not support an alternative retail outlet due to its beleaguered location and potential to cause disruption for our immediate neighbours.

We firmly believe the only sensible and way forward for The Dairy is to create a second holiday flat which would have a positive financial impact and improve the buildings' status on the Strand.

There is still annual demand for good quality holiday rental accommodation and the position of The Dairy on Higher Strand makes it absolutely ideal for this purpose. The premises is central, but without being located within the main hub of the town's busy pub area and this will appeal to a lot of visitors.

Mick and I would move into the café area to create a home for ourselves there and incorporate a small crafts and studio/pottery/honesty box sales area for Yve and a storage facility for electrical materials and tools for Mick's work.

Currently, the building is an eyesore and has suffered extensive long term neglect. Along with developing a high spec internal conversion, the building's elevations could be considerably visually improved, making our proposal a desirable option.

Yve and Mike Peck.