



Supporting Planning and Design Statement
July 2018

Woolpack Battery

JACKSON PLANNING

Woolpack Battery

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I. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement supports the Listed Building Application for the works to facilitate the improvement of the Woolpack Battery for staff accommodation for Tregarthen's Hotel.
- 1.2 This application follows a formal pre-application request made to Historic England in respect of the proposed works.
- 1.3 The proposed works to Woolpack Battery are to re-fit and modernise the previous works to convert the underground chambers into accommodation for the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust (last used in 2015). The previous works are thought to have been carried out some twenty years ago. The proposed works largely comprise the updating of existing services and the introduction of stud wall insertions to subdivide some of the existing chambers. These are light-touch and demountable; they will cause no notable impacts to original fabric and are reversible in nature.

The Proposal

- 1.4 The proposal includes an application for listed building consent for the works described below and planning permission to support the change of use of the site for seasonal staff accommodation, and the minor operational development.
- 1.5 The nature of the largely internal works will allow occupation on individual rather than group basis. This is essential to attract and retain seasonal staff.
- 1.6 The current proposal is for the following operational works:
- Two new windows and openings, with lintel to support barrel vaulting, to match existing window;
 - New interior window and opening;
 - Erection of new partitioning to create bedrooms 2, 3 and 4;
 - Creation of lobby area to bedroom 1 and 6;
 - Erection of new partitioning to create and relocate kitchen from proposed bedroom 7;
 - Erection of new partitioning within bedroom 7 to create store cupboard; and
 - En-suite kitchenette and shower room to bedroom 6.
- 1.7 The proposal has been subject to pre-application discussions with the local planning authority, and Historic England. The application has been developed in response to suggestions made by the above in the pre-application process.
- 1.8 The applicant is Tregarthen's Hotel Ltd.
- 1.9 The approach to the proposal was to devise a heritage-led sustainable solution to give the building a positive use and thereby respond to the inclusion of the heritage asset on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

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- I.10 The application is submitted in conjunction with a Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent to facilitate works of repair as necessary.

Rationale

- I.11 The owner of Tregarthen's Hotel is seeking to make best use of off-site accommodation for staff who work at the hotel to make better use of the Tregarthen's hotel site for its primary purpose for holiday makers conversion of the residual on site staff accommodation at Tregarthen's Hotel has been granted as per P/16/055/FUL. The existing staff accommodation is located within the best position on the Hotel site and fails to make best use of the site. In addition the proposal will bring about positive change to heritage both at the Woolpack Battery and at Tregarthen's Hotel as it will assist with part of the implementation of the scheme approved under P/16/055/FUL which was considered to improve the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- I.12 The overall ambition is to modernise the business model of the hotel over time to become a more sustainable business for future customer requirements. The intention is to create a more luxurious small boutique hotel with an increased proportion of serviced self-catering accommodation as an underpinning income generator for the business. This is being implemented in stages to allow a phased transition of the business over time. Creating the appropriate accommodation for staff is an essential part of that ambition.

Design Team

- I.13 The development proposal is supported by the following technical team:

Name	Role
Jackson Planning	Development strategy, planning and listed buildings application preparation and submission,.
CgMS	Heritage Assessment, Desk Based Archaeology Assessment and Development Strategy
RTP Surveyors	Scheme Design

2. Site Description and Planning History

Site Description

- 2.1 The Garrison Conservation Plan produced in 2010 gives an excellent general description as follows:
- 2.2 The Garrison, situated on a major promontory on the south coast of St Mary's the largest of the islands of Scilly, is a nationally important monument. Its importance lies mainly in the fact that it is an outstanding example of a well preserved multi-period and multi phased coastal fortification. The Garrison contains many fine examples of 17th and 18th century defensive works as well as two impressive early 20th century 6-inch gun batteries and their ancillary features. The Garrison earthworks, walls and gun batteries comprise a contiguous, mostly dual, circuit of defences that not only completely enclose the promontory but also isolate the fortification from the remainder of St Mary's Island.
- 2.3 St Mary's Garrison was until the 18th century known as The Hugh (promontory). It commands St Mary's Sound and The Road[^s], a deep water channel that affords a sheltered anchorage and also access to St Mary's Pool the main harbour of the Isles of Scilly. The Garrison guns dominated this sheltered anchorage. The Garrison not only served as the key to the defence of the Isles of Scilly but for many centuries it had a pivotal role as the cornerstone of the UK defensive strategy. It was the first fortification in the line of defences that extended from the Western Approaches to the eastern end of the English Channel.
- 2.4 A full description of the historic use of the Woolpack Battery is given in the Built Heritage Statement; this statement deals with its recent history.
- 2.5 The Site is situated within the Garrison on the headland to the west of Hugh Town on St Mary's and is entirely contained within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area.
- 2.6 The Woolpack Battery is currently recorded on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The Register notes that the Battery is generally in '*good condition and secure, but unoccupied since 2015. Converted to volunteer hostel accommodation in late twentieth century/early twenty-first century, but now suffering from problems with water ingress into the former magazines*'. Furthermore its condition is measured as '*poor*' with '*slow decay; no solution agreed*'.

Planning History

- 2.7 The Woolpack Battery was subject to a planning application to secure the change of use and operational development in 1996 for the use as accommodation for the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Volunteers. This was granted on 23 January 1996 under reference P.3869.
- 2.8 The consent was implemented allowing temporary hostel accommodation; it was restricted for use to organised groups and was precluded from use for commercial or holiday accommodation.

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- 2.9 The consent in 1996 provided the basis for the operational works of conversion and installation of drainage and services to facilitate the new use.

3. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was introduced in March 2012 as a key output resulting from the Government's Plan for Growth agenda. It sets out national planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied to proactively drive sustainable development and growth and to boost significantly the supply and delivery of new housing.
- 3.2 The 'golden thread' of sustainability was the major change introduced by the NPPF with a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.3 The framework (NPPF) is intended to be read as a whole but the sections of particular relevance are as follows.
- 3.4 Section 1 of the NPPF supports sustainable economic growth.
- 3.5 Section 7 of the NPPF deals with design.
- 3.6 Section 11 of the NPPF deals with conserving the Natural Environment, the aim is to ensure that development contributes to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 3.7 Section 12 deals with conserving and enhancing the Historic environment it seeks to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

NPPG

- 3.8 Planning guidance has been adopted in order to guide the application of the NPPF. This is extensive guidance covering many topics. The most critical to the consideration of this application is in relation to conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance as a core planning principle.
- 3.9 The guidance is useful in relation to assessing the degree of harm. It states that "substantial harm" is a high bar, which may not arise in many cases and while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally the degree of "substantial harm" will only be at a level where a development seriously affects a key element of an assets special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed.

Local Development Framework

- 3.10 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.11 The Development Framework is a term to include all the plans that make up the development plan. In this case there are both adopted and emerging plans.

Adopted Plans

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3.12 The Isles of Scilly Council is the Local Planning Authority for the Isles and is a unitary authority. It adopted its current **Local Plan 2005**. Relevant saved policies relating to this application are as listed below. However the plan is essentially 'time expired' in relation to compliance with the NPPF. The policies of the adopted plan lack compliance with the NPPF as they do not address the presumption in favour of sustainable development, they do not contain the balancing considerations and therefore only limited weight can be afforded to them and the NPPF prevails.

- Isles of Scilly Local Plan Policy 1 (Environmental Protection)
- Isles of Scilly Local Plan Policy 2 (Sustainable Development)

Designations

3.13 The whole archipelago is designated as an AONB. The site also falls within the conservation area.

Emerging Plans

3.14 Isles of Scilly Council has commenced the preparation of a replacement Local Plan. The Council are in the early stages of preparing the new Local Plan for the area, there is limited weight to consideration of the emerging policies in the planning balance. However the emerging plan contains policy support for new visitor accommodation will be supported where it improves the quality and choice of existing tourism and responds to the changing needs and expectations of visitors.

3.15 This project enables the creation of new visitor accommodation at Tregarthen's Hotel. The ability for the applicant to retain staff by improving accommodation is key to servicing increasing expectations of visitors.

Supplementary Planning Documents

AONB Management Plan

3.16 The Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004-2005 - Planning a Bright Future. The AONB Management Plan seeks to provide a co-ordinated approach to the sustainable management of the island's nationally important protected landscape, its environment and communities. The Plan has nine management themes including Communities, the Marine and Coastal Environment, Archeology, the Historic Environment and Heritage and Nature Conservation and Geology. Each theme has a long term vision or goal which sits within the overall shared vision of the Plan generated through extensive consultation.

3.17 The Isles of Scilly AONB guidance can be summarised as:

- Retains the qualities of its land and marine aspects that together form the island's unique essence.

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- Is recognised, understood and conserved for all to appreciate, enjoy and respect in a sustainable manner
- Welcomes visitors who contribute sustainably to the economy and spirit of the islands without overwhelming the qualities that they have come to enjoy.
- Supports a farming community successfully rising to the challenges of the changing economics of agriculture through sustainable diversification.
- Supports a community for whom Scilly is home, to enjoy a good quality of life, providing opportunities for young people whilst achieving an environmentally sustainable economy

The Garrison Conservation Plan

- 3.18 This document, produced in 2010, is non-statutory publication, which sets out the practical management of the Garrison.
- 3.19 This considered management and recommended the following: “It is important to retain the significance of The Garrison’s historical character and protect it from inappropriate development, so that it can be appreciated as a ‘place apart’ from Hugh Town.
- 3.20 In addition it was agreed that English Heritage [[Historic England](#)] will work with the Duchy of Cornwall and its tenants to ensure that, as far as possible, land uses within tenancies are compatible to the historic character of the Garrison.

4. Pre-Application Advice and Response

Pre Application Meetings and Responses

- 4.1 A meeting with Historic England was held in January 2018 with respect to both this application and in relation to the proposals for redevelopment of the Hotel. This was a positive meeting and support for a positive use of the Woolpack Battery was expressed.

- 4.2 In relation to the extent of designations Historic England advised: *“I am able to confirm that the battery's underground complex, comprising its magazine, war shelter and lockers, are excluded from the scheduling but the ground beneath and above them is included. In addition all modern signs, fittings, service trenches and their contents, and dumped debris are excluded from the scheduling but the ground beneath them is included. The listing extends to include the built structures of the battery's underground magazine and war shelter. Given this situation it is likely in our view that listed building consent (LBC) will be required in addition to scheduled monument consent (SMC) in this case.”*

5. Planning Assessment & Conclusion

Introduction

- 5.1 The assessment of the planning application is a balance of all the considerations associated with the proposal, the site and the local environment. Whilst planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) they must also pay regard to the guidance provided by the NPPF as a material consideration.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places a presumption in favour of sustainable development as the golden thread running through decision-making. Where policies are out of date planning permission should be granted unless specific policies of the NPPF indicate otherwise. This is the case with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.3 The development proposed is entirely within the existing structure of the Woolpack Battery and therefore would not be considered harmful to the AONB area as a whole, therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development prevails as the policies relating to the AONB are not harmed and therefore are not engaged to overcome NPPF 14.

Development Plan

- 5.4 Given the existing Local Plan is in effect 'time expired' in relation to the NPPF the current development plan policies have no weight in the consideration of the current application. The proposals sit well with the emerging Local Plan policy WC5 – however, this policy can only have limited weight at this stage of the plan process.

Impact of the Proposal

- 5.5 The operational proposals have very little impact given the below ground nature of the battery. The Built Heritage Assessment considers the impact on the listed building and confirms that: *“Not only will the proposed development cause **no harm to any heritage asset’s significance**, the scheme will deliver **a negligible enhancement to the significance** of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area (and the associated military assets within it), a **minor/moderate enhancement** to the Steval Battery and the Greystones Barracks etc., and a **moderate enhancement** to the significance of the Woolpack Battery, which will be reflected by its removal from Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register.”*
- 5.6 The use by Tregarthen’s staff rather than Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust has no practical difference in terms of planning assessment other than it also creates a positive opportunity on the Tregarthen’s Hotel site so is more compliant with the principles of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development

- 5.7 The NPPF advises that sustainable development has three strands: firstly an Economic Role to create strong, responsive competitive economy, secondly a Social Role- to create a high quality built environment to support the community and thirdly an Environmental Role to protect/ enhance natural, built and historic environment, improve biodiversity, minimise waste.
- 5.8 The preceding sections of the report have examined all the relevant parts of the sustainability spectrum and show substantial support for all three strands of sustainable development.
- 5.9 These can be summarised as follows:

Economic Role

- The relocation of hotel staff off site will allow the additional self-catering accommodation units to be developed and will create capital for further investment, as demonstrated by the success of the four units of self catering accommodation that have generated significant boost to income for the Hotel and vastly improved the offer for visitors.
- The long-term significant investment of circa £5million development value (for all phases) plus ongoing income expenditure from repeat business is a valuable injection in to the local economy from the private sector.

The Social Role

- The proposal in particular supports the creation a high quality environment through a careful contextual scheme that respects the Isles of Scilly Design Guide.
- The location of the staff at Woolpack Battery reduces tensions/conflict between staff and guests on the hotel site.

The Environmental Role

- The long term positive use of the Woolpack Battery ensures its removal from the heritage at risk register and allows the further development of Tregarthen's Hotel to proceed.
- 5.10 The decision maker has a statutory duty to give consideration to keeping the identified heritage assets from harm under the auspices of s.66 (in regard to listed buildings) and s.72 (in regard to conservation areas) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Following the statutory test, the decision maker will need to weigh any harm that the scheme causes to heritage assets' significance (namely a negligible degree of harm within

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the spectrum of less than substantial harm to the significance of a small portion of original fabric of the Woolpack Battery) with the scheme's significant public benefits, as required by paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

Sustaining and Enhancing the Significance of the Heritage Assets

5.11 It is clear that in terms of heritage there are positive benefits to conservation area both at the Tregarthen's Hotel site and at the Woolpack Battery and in addition the proposal has the wider public benefit of sustaining and supporting investment in this important tourist facility which supports both jobs and inward investment. Moreover the development proposal will provide a sustainable use for the asset, arrest its deterioration and eventually will lead the Battery to be removed from the Register. As such the proposal will **enhance the significance** of the Woolpack Battery and those other heritage assets with which it holds a group value.

Economic Vitality

5.12 This second strand of NPPF 131 is also met by the proposal securing the long term future of the Hotel is a key consideration for the future of the Tourist Industry on the Island and for Hugh Town more generally by providing suitable staff accommodation.

Local Character and Distinctiveness

5.13 The third strand of NPPF 131 is clearly met by the proposals. The proposal will **enhance the significance** of the Woolpack Battery and those other heritage assets with which it holds a group value and in addition given that this proposal facilitates the approved development of the Tregarthen's Hotel this has benefits for character and appearance and will result in **a minor enhancement** to the significance of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area.

Conclusion - The Planning Balance and Recommendation

5.14 In coming to a conclusion on the proposal the planning authority must consider whether the proposal constitutes sustainable development and consider the balance of harms and benefits of the proposal given legislation, guidance in the NPPF as a material consideration.

5.15 The above assessment has shown that the development proposal as described and assessed in this statement shows how it meets the three strands of sustainability and has also shown no harm to amenity or any other harms to any public interest.

5.16 The scheme has overall compliance with National and Local Policy and with no demonstrable harms that outweigh the considerable benefits, assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole. The development should therefore be considered sustainable and listed building consent should be granted without delay.