

Kingwell Emma

From: Planning (Isles of Scilly)
To: Martin Nicolle
Subject: RE: Objection to planning application Bank Cottage P/18/075/FUL

From: Martin Nicolle <provided>
Sent: 14 November 2018 00:05
To: Planning (Isles of Scilly) <planning@scilly.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Objection to planning application Bank Cottage P/18/075/FUL

The Planning Officer
Council of Isles of Scilly
TR21 OLW

Dear Sir or Madam
P/18/075/FUL

Further to my email of same date which deals with a boundary issue on the above application, please find below our formal objection to specific planning aspects of the application.

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION
BANK COTTAGE, BRYHER, TR23 OPR
P/18/075/FUL

It is unfortunate that neither the applicant (who does not live on Bryher) nor the applicant's architect appears to have spoken to any of the neighbours about the plans. While we are supportive of the applicant's desire to upgrade and improve her property and acknowledge that the property needs updating and renovation, we are concerned that the proposed developments are an undesirable overdevelopment of the site and would have an unnecessary and detrimental impact on an important area of Bryher.

While not a planning consideration, Bank Cottage was one of the most successful guest houses on the Islands. It will be sad if it effectively becomes a second home, unoccupied for long periods. We acknowledge that the applicant has expressed the intention of eventually retiring to the Islands and is already a loyal time-share owner on Tresco.

PLANNING POLICY

The Isles of Scilly Design Guide; Appropriate Design Responses: Extensions and Alterations (page 75) states: '***In view of the Conservation Area designation covering the islands, the Planning Authority will assess whether a proposal to alter or extend a building will harm it's character or it's setting. The Authority will also assess whether the extension or alteration will result in the loss of privacy or daylight in adjacent properties.***'

The current Local Plan (2005) states, '***...the design of a proposal should be based on a thorough and caring understanding of its place and context.***'

Policy SS2 Sustainable Quality Design and Place-Making, taken from the current consultation draft of the Local Plan 2015 – 2030, states that '***Buildings will be required to respect and reinforce an area's character and identity in order to maintain locally distinctive communities...Respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational treatment, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate any new buildings into their local setting...Safeguard***

the amenity of existing occupiers and create a high quality environment for future occupiers that addresses issues of privacy, overlooking, overshadowing and/or any overbearing impacts.'

Policy LC9 Residential Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation, taken from the current consultation draft of the Local Plan 2015 – 2030, states that '***Development to extend and/or alter a dwelling or any outbuilding ancillary to the main residential use will be permitted where the proposal:***

- a) respects the scale, proportions, materials and overall design and character of the existing property; and***
- b) does not harm the street scene or surrounding area; and***
- c) avoids the material loss of privacy and amenity for the residents of neighbouring properties.'***

Our objections are relevant and responsive to the above policy considerations:

1. The proposed increased height (1.165m) to the main house will be detrimental to the area, as it will be seen on approach from all road directions. It will create a "prison like" high granite wall for the many visitors who pass along the roadside to the East (behind the house). It will stand out from the other dwellings along the seaward side of that road (Hillside, Carn Villa, Hanjague and Bank Cottage as existing) all of which are significantly set down below the road above.

It also seems likely that, during the course of raising the roadside wall, the applicant will "discover" that the existing wall (which it is intended to preserve) and its foundations cannot support the extra height/load of raising the wall and the applicant will be coming back for permission to completely rebuild the wall – effectively rebuilding the whole house, giving a completely modern and out of keeping appearance. Indeed, it is not clear how the roadside wall could be raised and still match existing.

2. The NW gable end is, at present, built with rendered concrete block (granite coins) painted a light sand colour. This matches other dwellings nearby. This finish is less over-powering than what is proposed, with its much elevated form and granite facing. It is also not clear how the applicant proposes to source suitable matching local granite. If granite is imported, this could look completely out of place. Should permission be granted, it should be conditional on local granite being used, which we believe is very scarce.
3. The proposed fenestration of the same NW gable end with just two windows will not match other properties nearby, be stark and seriously detract from what is at present an attractive and interesting gable end with windows and porch.
4. The proposed paved main entrance from the NW will emphasize the increased height and impact of the NW gable-end on this corner elevation. This is one of the important walking junctions on the island, where hundreds of visitors walk by. Some of the most photographed views on the island are taken in this immediate area. It could easily also look twee and suburban – completely out of character. Already, many people feel that the self-catering cottage "The Moorings" on the same property looks suburban.
5. We fear that on the North elevation, the new untreated timber extension forward from the gable end of the raised main house, (incorporating the front door entry to the glass roof passage) will be visible to anyone approaching from the Hotel direction. Unless completely screened from road view, the extension will look like a warehouse/shed, tacked onto the front of the house – a perception reinforced by the low pitch of the proposed roof, the lack of windows and the use of untreated timber. If visible, we believe it will look completely out of character.
6. The application refers to the "Cottage". It was proposed in the original draft of the Planning Design Statement that this should form a separate unit of accommodation to house a 'key' worker. This has now been amended. The Planning Design statement states that it currently contains "a small bedroom, shower room and living room". It has always been used just to provide overnight accommodation consisting of two extra bedrooms for the previous owners, only during the season and when Bank Cottage was a guest house. There has never been a living room or cooking facilities.
7. The West end of the proposed "small timber extension" to the "Cottage" (well over 100% increase in internal floor area) and the proposed terrace will, we calculate, be raised by something over 1m above the

ground. This is unnecessary, as the ground is sloping and, even taking account that it is 0.6 m under the height of the existing building, it leaves the West end standing much higher than needed.

This is significant because, as proposed, this extension will be intrusive and dominant, when viewed from anywhere to the North West – ie from the area to the seaward side of the Hotel, extending to the top of Gweal Hill or from neighbouring properties. It would add to the mass of the building line, which is viewed above and around the proposed structure.

extra This could be mitigated by setting the extension down by a further 1.0m. This would simply mean a few steps between the old and the new – typically found many other houses locally.

8. The roof ridge height of the new Gallery/workshop on the West side beach road should be reduced by at least 0.75m, to prevent it being more intrusive and dominating for people walking along the beach road. A reduced pitch or different roof design could probably accomplish this.
9. The Planning Design Statement refers to the workshop/studio variously as a studio/workshop but also “as a gallery-studio when required” and for “casual enterprise”. It seems that it is intended that this will be a retail outlet. This should be clarified.
10. The Planning Design Statement states that the “visible façade” of the workshop/studio “is comprised of timber panels which act as sliding screens. The screens when closed, will give the impression of a timber fence forming the edge to the garden. When opened up, the glazed doors will provide direct access to the beach path and views out to sea”. This appears to fly in the face of assurances from the applicant that no hedges will be removed. At present, there is a high screening hedge, both to the Hotel side of the road gateway in front of the existing shed and between the same gateway and the Moorings Cottage. Removal of these hedges would expose all the development (workshop, cottage and house) to sight from the road and would create an appearance of ribbon development along the road.

CONDITIONS

We would respectfully suggest the following conditions to any grant of permission

1. The hedges either side of the entrance to the existing workshop/garage should not be removed in whole or in part and should be retained at their current height.

Reason – to prevent appearance of “ribbon development” along the beach road and to screen/reduce impact of proposed developments on the site.

2. The hedges and trees at the road junction marking the corner closest to Atlanta should not be removed in whole or in part and should be retained at current height.

Reason – to reduce impact of proposed developments on the site, which would otherwise be very visible from the highway.

3. Suitable conditions should be imposed to prevent residential use of the gallery/workshop or subdivision of the property into separate saleable residential units.

Reason - to comply with planning restrictions

4. The silver leafed tree (attached photo) and palm tree near the pond in the lower garden should be retained.

Reason – these are landscape features and serve to screen/reduce the visual impact of development on the property.

5. Given this is an important holiday and residential area with several self-catering units and the Hotel all within earshot, work should be restricted to hours 0800 to 1800 hrs and between months of November and March only.
6. There is considerable bat activity in the area. Full bat surveys should be done and protection measures enforced.
7. Measures should be taken to minimize light pollution to preserve our night skies. Floodlighting, night time security lighting etc should be prohibited. Mitigation of light pollution from the glass roof passageway in the main house should be considered

SUGGESTION

Consideration should be given to adding dormer structures to the West roof to break up the outline of the roof and break the continuity of the line of 10 windows across the West first floor elevation. A drawing to illustrate is attached.

UPDATE

With the applicant's permission, we have today spoken directly with the architect. We have been told that our boundary issue, the height of the extension to the Cottage and the height of the main house are all in process of being re-considered and that revised and amended plans are to be submitted. We understand that the Council has also just issued new 'advice' to the Applicant and imposed some sort of deadline for re-submission by Wednesday of next week. We are a little surprised that Planning is issuing advice to the applicant at this stage. We are very concerned that last minute amendments will be made, without interested parties having adequate opportunity to review and assess the situation. The architect has said that it is for the applicant to decide whether to consult locally. We ask that any amendments or changes should cause the application to be deferred, to allow for re-appraisal and additional comments by interested parties.

Regards

Martin and Fee Nicolle
Hanjague
Bryher



