

TRESCO RACKET TOWN

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This statement is to support a planning application to refurbish and extend the cottage 'Racket Town' located on Treско.

The existing dwelling is habitable but is somewhat under-serviced by modern standards. It has a poor energy efficiency performance rating and parts of the building that were constructed in lightweight materials are now showing signs of deterioration.

The proposed works form part of the Treско Estate's policy for ongoing investment in improved accommodation for visitors to the island. Inevitably, investment on Treско has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, restaurant and retail services across the archipelago benefiting.



EXISTING

Racket Town is sited on Tresco on south facing inland plot overlooking the great pool. The house is situated 200m east of New Grimsby, but is set distinctly away from settlement cluster. The plot is in isolation from other buildings with the exception of a modern agricultural barn to the south.

The site lies within the Isles of Scilly AONB and Conservation Area.

The house is a compact traditional island bungalow, oriented north – south and set into the sloping hillside.

The cottage itself is easily missed from the road that passes by on the northern side, as it is enveloped by garden space and lush green plant-life. The dwelling houses 3 bedrooms, a combined living and dining space, and compact kitchen.

The original part of the cottage was constructed in granite masonry, which is still visible on the western elevation. It has subsequently been extended along its eastern side, with a timber framed and boarded extension and a new expansive tiled roof that has subsumed the footprint of the original cottage. An additional bedroom and bathroom were also added in a new wing to the southeast. The bedroom extension fails to engage in a satisfactory manner with the existing cottage and somewhat spoils the southern elevation with its disjointed appearance.

The house is habitable but the cellular nature of the existing layout does not suit 21st Century living arrangements. Internally, rooms are small and circulation is dark and labyrinthine. The building fabric is, for the most part, structurally sound but was constructed before modern insulation standards. Consequently, the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the property requires some improvement. Some parts of the building that were constructed in lightweight materials are now showing signs of deterioration and need replacing.



PROPOSALS

The proposed alterations to Racket Town form part of Tresco Estate's ongoing strategy of investment into improving the quality and diversity of accommodation on the island. With implementation of the proposed changes, Racket Town would provide accessible and private accommodation specifically designed to cater for elderly occupants. This is an offering, which is in otherwise limited supply across the island. The alterations would improve the architecture of the existing building, both in terms of the internal layout and spaces, and its external appearance.

The modifications and extensions would be vernacular in style, taking its cues from the existing building and respecting the character of the conservation area. Where more contemporary elements are proposed, these continue an architectural language that has been established on Tresco over the last 30 years, using natural materials like zinc and untreated timber in a manner sensitive and appropriate to the existing architecture and natural landscape.

The original part of the cottage would be extended to the south by continuing the existing roofline. The extent of this extension would be 3.6m, in line with the southerly limit established by the existing SE extension (to be demolished). The extended spaces would house a new independent living room and study, with glazed screens looking out the gable. Here, the roof would oversail, supported by two granite piers to create a covered canopy outside these rooms.

The existing porch on the west elevation would be replaced with a larger glazed bay with a hipped zinc roof. This would extend the kitchen-dining space, improve natural light, and provide better views towards the sea to the West.

The existing SE bedroom extension would be demolished and replaced with a new larger wing, oriented east - west over the existing footprint. The new wing would house 3 ensuite bedrooms. It would be equivalent in width to the existing dwelling, with matching ridge and eaves heights.

The proposed materials would reflect their surroundings and continue the palette established on the existing building, and the island as whole. This would include a palette of tiled roof, timber joinery, and cedar boarded walls with elements of granite masonry.



East Elevation



North Elevation



West Elevation



South Elevation

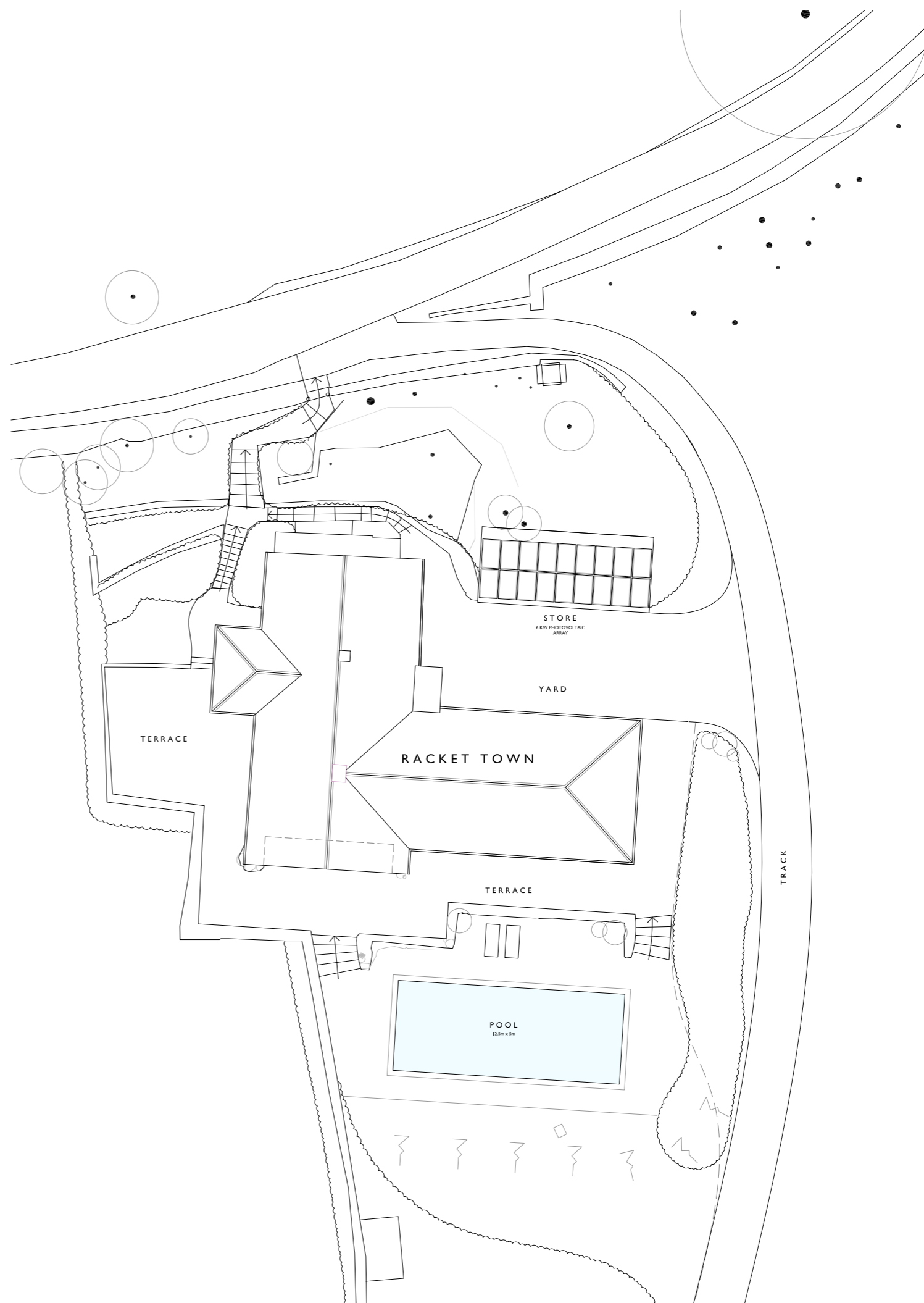
To the east, a new yard accessed from the adjacent grass track, would be created in the elbow of the L-shaped dwelling. This would be enclosed on its northern side by a new lightweight outbuilding cut into the hillside. This outbuilding would be used to house a studio / workshop, a bicycle and buggy port, log storage, and for sustainable energy generation. The building would be timber framed and cedar clad. The south facing roof would be a mono-pitch covered by 4kW a solar PV array.

Below the house (to the south) a new terrace and modest swimming pool would be cut into the existing sloping garden. Its discreet sunken position in relation to the house, combined with effective screening by existing vegetation and boundary walls, would ensure that the visual impact of this terrace is minimal.

The proposals fit comfortably within the existing site boundaries. The additional building footprint covers a small area of existing garden and there will be de minimis ecological impact as a consequence.

The existing house is already connected to the island's electric and water supply. The drainage arrangements will also remain unchanged. Tresco has ample water and electrical supplies to accommodate this modest development.

The scheme will have minimal outside lighting to respect the dark skies policy of the local plan.



PLANNING POLICY

The building has an established use as a holiday cottage. It has not been significantly altered in almost 30 years. The changes proposed herewith are in accordance with Tresco Estate's policy of improving the quality of the existing building stock and accommodation.

The draft local plan, which is out for consultation, encourages flexible tourist accommodation of this sort.

POLICY LC3 Balanced Housing Stock

- (1) All new residential development must contribute towards the creation of sustainable, balanced and inclusive island communities by ensuring an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures, taking account of the existing and future housing needs of the community, imbalances in the housing stock, and viability and market considerations.
- (2) All new homes must offer a good standard of accommodation by being constructed in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards (Technical Housing Standards) (or any replacement standards);
- (3) All homes will be encouraged to be accessible and adaptable in accordance with Building Regulations Requirement M4(2) or any successor regulations.
- (4) Wheelchair users' homes will be encouraged to be constructed in accordance with Building Regulations Requirement M4(3) or any successor regulations, and will be encouraged where a specific local need for a wheelchair-adaptable or accessible home is identified.
- (5) All affordable homes permitted under LC6 and LC7, including custom/self-build, must be affordable by size and type to local people and will remain so in perpetuity,
- (6) All affordable homes will be subject to a condition removing permitted development rights in respect of extensions, to ensure they remain of a size that meets the affordability needs of the islands.

The proposals directly respond to the criteria of Policy LC3

The standard of accommodation within the dwelling would be substantially improved. An inaccessible existing cottage would be converted into dwelling suitable for a group of elderly occupants or wheelchair users. This change is in response to the developing demands of the Tresco market and goals of the local plan. The availability of this type of property on Tresco is very limited. The proposals form part of Tresco Estate's continuing strategy of adaptation and diversification to ensure balance in the available housing stock and in the operation of the commercial enterprise as whole.

The success of this strategy has been key to the ongoing viability of the island economy. Inevitably, investment on Tresco has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, restaurant and retail services across the islands benefiting.



Isles of Scilly Local Plan

Including Minerals and Waste

2015 to 2030

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The proposals have been developed to include a range of strategies to achieve sustainability in construction and in the building's ongoing use.

EMBODIED ENERGY IN CONSTRUCTION :

A considerable proportion of a building's carbon footprint is attributable to the manufacturing and transportation of building materials. To minimise this, the extension would be constructed from a lightweight and prefabricated timber frame; a thermally efficient and carbon sequestering construction method. This approach would also reduce carbon emissions involved in transporting materials to the island.

The building's exterior would be clad in long lasting materials, and installed with robust detailing, capable of withstanding the marine environment would be employed in the construction works. Improved lifespan ensures a better return on the energy expended in construction.

Indigenous natural materials would be used wherever possible. These would include reclaimed granite and some local timber. The specification would be developed with reference to the BRE Green Guide to Specification to evaluate the environmental credentials of the materials procured from further afield.

HEAT LOSS AND ENERGY USE:

The proposals take a 'fabric first' approach to energy reduction, seeking to minimise consumption from the outset through the use of passive design principles. These include optimising orientation and massing, as well as ensuring the use of high-performance building fabric.

The new building elements will have insulation that is far superior to the existing extension that is being replaced. This will reduce the energy required to heat the property. Improved double glazing would: improve air tightness; improve thermal performance; increase the amount of natural light entering the property; and reduce the energy demand from space heating and artificial lighting as a consequence

The south facing elevation would incorporate large glazed screens to maximise solar gain and reduce the heating requirements during the winter months. These are protected by an overhanging eaves and projecting roof over the gable to prevent overheating when the sun is high in the summer months.

The deep L-shaped plan of the dwelling would improve the surface area to volume ratio, reducing heat loss per unit of area.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES:

A 4 kW Solar PV array would be provided on the roof of the outbuilding. The electricity generated by the panels would be used by the house and to charge golf buggies. Excess power would be exported to the local grid. The visual impact of the PV panels on the houses will be minimal as they will be screened by the dwelling. The energy and carbon associated with the manufacture and installation of the PV panels will be covered by 3 years of generation in this location.

The existing oil fired boiler would be removed. The dwelling and pool would be heated using air-source heat pumps, which are typically 3 times more efficient than traditional direct electric heating methods. This approach is particularly effective on Tresco, where the temperate climate ensures operating efficiency is maintained through the year. These would be powered by locally generated electricity from the PV array; effectively creating a zero carbon heating system.

An additional stove would allow the property to be heated using fuel from local and sustainable sources. This is particularly effective to top up the heating in the winter when external temperatures and output from the PV array are reduced.

The scheme as whole would be also sustainable in the broader sense; supporting the economy of the Islands and providing work for the people who live there.

ACCESS

OUTSIDE:

Existing tracks will be used to access the plot.

The absence of cars on Tresco creates a safe, peaceful and refreshing environment and reduces emissions. For less mobile guests, golf buggies or mobility scooters can be hired, but most visitors hire bicycles or walk.

The new yard would provide space for a golf cart to turn and park, and to unload adjacent to entrance door.

The new outbuilding would provide covered space to park and charge electric golf buggies and store bicycles.

Tresco's emergency services would have sufficient existing capacity to deal with the modest increase in scale of this property. The new yard would provide better access for attending vehicles.

INSIDE:

Internally the modifications have specifically developed to enable the property to cater for elderly occupants or visitors with impaired mobility. They would comply with Part M of the Building Regulations as a minimum standard. The following improvements have been made to improve the overall accessibility of the dwelling:

- New doorways would have improved clearance
- The front door would have a level threshold
- The dwelling would have level access throughout.
- New glazed screens would be floor to ceiling, ensuring views out for seated occupants.
- Generous circulation spaces would make the dwelling more accessible for wheelchair users or ambulant disabled occupants.
- There would be sufficient space to accommodate a carer if required.
- New services would be installed at heights to suit elderly / disabled occupants.
- Storage adjacent to front door could accommodate mobility equipment.
- Provision of a large visitors W.C. shower room
- Improved heating and comfort for elderly occupants.
- The dwelling would be all on one level,



SUMMARY

The changes to the existing building would be appropriate in scale and in keeping with the established island style.

The purpose of this project is to provide enhanced accommodation for visitors to Tresco. Responding to the changing expectations of the market delivers the aspirations of the Destination Management Plan. Improving the quality and balance of properties on offer maintains and enhances the economic activity of the island, benefiting the Isles of Scilly as whole.