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Planning Statement

Trevean **Higher Town** St Martin's Isles of Scilly

Prepared on Behalf of: Maureen Bayetto and Mark Travers

Ref: 15031

Date: 08 June 2020



Contents

Execut	ive Summary	1
1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	3
3.	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	5
4.	PLANNING HISTORY	7
5.	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	8
	The Development Plan	8
	National Planning Policy Framework	8
	Other Material Consideration	11
	Appropriate Weight	13
6.	PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	15
	Principle of Development	15
	Design	16
	Impact on AONB	16
	Impact on Conservation Area	18
7.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	22
Figure 1	- Site Location (taken from Google Maps)	3
Figure 2	- Proposed Site Layout (extracted from submitted plans)	5
Figure 3	 Extract from Site Plan P/19/088 	7



Executive Summary

Evans Jones Ltd have been instructed by Maureen Bayetto and Mark Travers to submit an application for the conversion of a greenhouse/store into a studio, alterations to the existing dwelling, addition of a workshop and the addition of a porch at Trevean, Higher Town, St Martin's.

As the site is located on the Isles of Scilly, the site falls within both an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Conservation Area. This Statement will demonstrate that the proposed works will not harm the Conservation Area or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while achieving an appropriate standard of design.

The proposal is acceptable in principle, complying with the relevant Development Plan polices. This statement has assessed all the other relevant planning considerations and found that the scheme is fully compliant with the Development Plan and other material policy considerations, including national policy and the pursuit of sustainable development.

Ref: 15031 Page 1 Date: 08 June 2020



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning and Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of the householder application seeking planning permission for the conversion of a domestic greenhouse/store into a studio, along with alterations to the existing dwelling and the addition of a workshop and porch.
- 1.2 This Statement sets out the main planning considerations and justifications for the scheme. In support of the application, this Statement demonstrates that the proposed scheme is acceptable in principle and expands upon issues relating to, *inter alia*, matters of design and the impact on the AONB and Conservation Area.
- 1.3 The application submitted comprises the following plans and documents.
 - Location Plan
 - Drawing No. PS-TGS-8d Proposed Studio, Workshop and Alterations to Existing Dwelling
 - Drawing No. T-TV 3a Existing Buildings
- 1.4 This statement should be read in conjunction with the plans and documents that make up the application as a whole.



2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located at Trevean, Higher Town, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly.
- The site comprises a two-storey dwelling, with an associated greenhouse/store. The existing cottage is a three-bedroom property, all bedrooms being located on the first floor, and is faced in granite and render beneath an artificial slate roof. The greenhouse is situated a short distance adjacent and is again constructed from granite, with natural slate and glazed roofing incorporating solar PV panels. The site in its context can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Site Location (taken from Google Maps)

- 2.3 Access to the site is currently obtained via a single narrow road. No options for public transport are available on the island of St Martin's.
- 2.4 Characteristically, St Martin's' northern coasts comprise a mix of exposed heathland and rocky shorelines whilst the southern side is more sheltered. The landscape of this southern side is formed of a series of fields enclosed by hedgerows and stone walls, with clear patches of bulb strips and larger, more regular fields, for grazing. Higher Town, where the site is located, is clustered along the south-facing slope of the island.



- 2.5 In terms of settlement pattern, St Martin's has three main clusters, these being Lower Town, Middle Town and Higher Town, with the site located in Higher Town.
- 2.6 The traditional building material for all types of buildings on the Isles of Scilly is granite, with later terraced dwellings on the island being rendered. For windows, the traditional material is painted timber and for roofing, slate is the prevalent material for dwellings built in the 19th and 20th Centuries.
- 2.7 In policy terms, the site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a Heritage Coast and a Conservation Area, designations that wash over the Isles of Scilly in their entirety.



3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

3.1 The application seeks householder planning permission for the conversion of the existing greenhouse/store into a studio and addition of a workshop, with associated alterations to the exterior of the property including the addition of a porch. The proposed site layout is shown below in Figure 2.

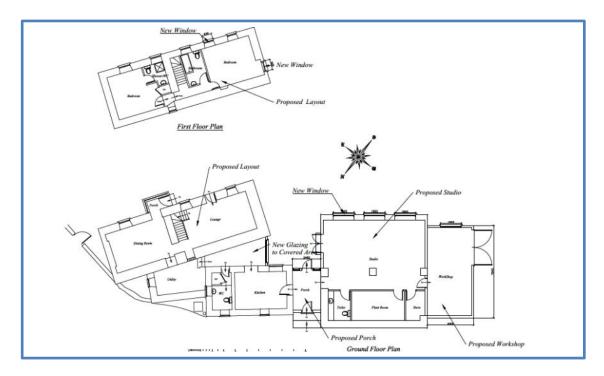


Figure 2 - Proposed Site Layout (extracted from submitted plans)

- 3.2 The existing greenhouse/storage area for the existing dwelling will be converted into a home studio with associated WC, plant room and store. A modest new workshop is proposed, connected onto the side of the studio. To provide a connection between the studio and the dwelling, a modest porch to be added.
- 3.3 Incidental internal changes will be made at the ground floor, with the lounge and bedroom being converted into a dining room and lounge. At first floor level, the number of bedrooms will be reduced from three to two. Although not requiring permission in their own right, these changes dictate the installation of two new windows within the south east and south west elevations respectively.
- 3.4 Within the north east elevation, new doors will be installed together with new glazing, and the exterior refinished in limestone render. At the south east elevation, the existing doors will be removed and replaced with a new window and there will be new external cladding comprising hit and miss boarding,



granite and limestone render. The hit and miss boarding will serve the proposed workshop.

- 3.5 The roof will be modified to be natural slate, with solar PV panels installed. For the porch connecting the different sections of the dwelling, the glazed roof will be framed in white-painted softwood.
- 3.6 The existing windows for the dwelling will be timber sash windows, to be painted grey.



4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 A review of the Council's online planning register shows application *P/19/088* in reference to the site at Trevean. The application relates to crown works to be conducted on three elm trees due to their close proximities to the cottage and resultant shading effects and was recently granted consent.

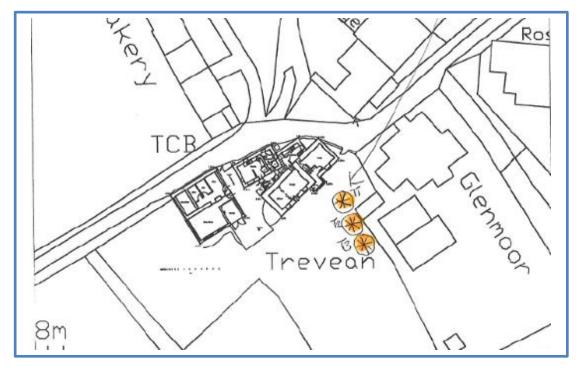


Figure 3 – Extract from Site Plan P/19/088

4.2 Application P/20/026 has now been submitted. This refers to new roof structure, not originally anticipated or expected as part of the works. The original roof has been deemed unsafe and as such the applicant is anxious to make safe and have weathertight by end of September. Hence why this element has preceded this application.



5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 5.2 The Development Plan policy context for the site and the surrounding area is provided by the adopted Isles of Scilly Local Plan: A 2020 Vision (Local Plan). The policies of the Local Plan that are of relevance to this application are as follows:
 - Policy 1 Environmental Protection
 - Policy 2 Sustainable Development
- 5.3 Policy 1 identifies that all relevant future development proposals respect and protect the recognised quality of the islands' natural, archaeological, historic and built environment. As part of this, development will need to conserve or enhance the AONB and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.4 Policy 2 states that development will be permitted in situations where a proposal would, where practicable and appropriate, contribute to the sustainability of the islands' environment. It also states that existing buildings can be conserved or enhanced through appropriate design, including siting, layout, density, scale, external appearance and landscaping.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was revised on 19th February 2019. The Framework sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England and details how these are expected to be applied. It is, in itself, a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.6 The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute



to the achievement of sustainable development, which can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means "approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay" or "where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless: i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole."

5.7 The Framework defines the three overarching objectives of sustainable development as:

An Economic Objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy be ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

A Social Role – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;

An Environmental Role – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.8 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in the Framework; they



are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

- 5.9 Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that the policies within the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.
- 5.10 Paragraph 213 of the Framework advises that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to publication. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework and the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 5.11 Section 12 of the Framework provides context to design within planning.

 Paragraph 124 states "the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."
- 5.12 Paragraph 172 states inter alia that "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited…"
- 5.13 Paragraph 193 states "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."



Other Material Consideration

- 5.14 Outside of the Development Plan and the Framework, there are other material policy considerations that need to be discussed in relation to this development. In this case, the Isles of Scilly Design Guide (Design Guide), the Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2015-2020 (Management Plan) and the emerging Draft Local Plan (2015-2030) are material considerations.
- 5.15 For extensions and alterations, the Design Guide states that, in considering how to adapt the building, it is necessary to have regard to maintaining the character of the existing building and its capacity for change. In view of the Conservation Area designation covering the island, the Planning Authority will assess whether a proposal to alter or extend a building will harm its character or setting.

 Assessment with also be given as to whether the extension or alteration will result in the loss of privacy or daylight in adjacent properties.
- 5.16 The objective of the Management Plan meanwhile is to ensure that development, wherever possible, enhances the special qualities of the AONB and not adversely affect the AONB designation.
- 5.17 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."
- 5.18 Whilst it has not been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council of the Isles of Scilly, there is a draft Isles of Scilly Conservation Area Character Statement Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which is also of some limited relevance.
- 5.19 This document sets out that the towns on St Martin's have the most compact character compared to the other islands. In terms of materials, the SPD notes that granite is the traditional building material, with modern infill developing a vernacular of rough sawn vertical batten (flat wooden strips) and board timber



extensions. The SPD also notes that it is likely that renewable energy generation will increase over time and it is important that any such measures are sensitive to the character of the Conservation Area.

- The emerging Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015-2030 (Emerging Plan) is of some relevance to this application. This has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination by a Planning Inspector and public examination hearings have been held. As the Inspector's Report has not been received by the Council, at time of writing this statement, only limited weight can be given to the Emerging Plan.
- 5.21 The policies in the Emerging Plan that are of relevance to this application are as follows:
 - Policy SS2 Sustainable Quality Design and Place Making
 - Policy OE1 Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape and Seascape
 - Policy OE7 Development Affecting Heritage
 - Policy LC9 Residential Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
- 5.22 Policy SS2 states that development will not be permitted if it is considered to be of poor or unsustainable design.
- 5.23 Policy OE1 states that development will only be permitted where it aligns with the statutory purpose of the AONB and therefore conserves and, where appropriate, enhances, the islands' landscape, seascape and scenic beauty of the landscape.
- 5.24 Policy OE7 states that great weight will be given to the conservation of the islands irreplaceable heritage assets, stating that if there is any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, this harm must be justified. For development within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area, the policy states that this will be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character. The appearance of the area and its setting and the design of the proposal must also be taken into account, particularly with regard to the development characteristics and context of the area and the form, scale, size and massing of nearby buildings, together with the materials of construction. It states that all development proposals should be informed by proportionate



historic environment assessments and evaluations.

5.25 Policy LC9 focuses on development for residential extensions and ancillary accommodation. The policy states that development will be permitted where it respects its setting taking account that, where the existing dwelling is already within the minimum range of internal space standards and a proposal is to enlarge the property, this will only be permitted to meet a growing household size. It also states that proposals will need to ensure there is sufficient space within the existing curtilage to accommodate the extension avoiding overdevelopment of the site. It also states that residential amenity space and parking provision should not be adversely impacted.

Appropriate Weight

- Planning Act 1990 states that, in dealing with an application, the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan so far as material to the application and any other material considerations, meaning that full weight is given to the Development Plan. In this instance, full weight is given to the adopted Local Plan as it forms the relevant development plan.
- 5.27 Whilst weight has been given to the policies in the Emerging Plan by the Council in previous applications, the plan has not yet been adopted and the Inspector's Report for the Emerging Plan has not been received. As such, there is no guarantee that the policies within the Emerging Plan as it currently stands will remain following the Inspector's Report. As such, only limited weight can be given to the Emerging Plan at this time.
- As it forms the basis of Government policy for planning applications, a high degree of weight should be given to the policies of the Framework. This should not be at the expense of the Development Plan since it is up to date.
- 5.29 Since they do not form part of the Development Plan, limited weight can be given to the Design Guide. However, it is a material consideration and should not be overlooked.





6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Having regard for the proposed development; the site's planning history; the relevant planning policy context; and all other material issues; the main planning considerations for the determination of this application relate to the principle of development, design, the impact on the AONB and the impact on heritage assets.

Principle of Development

- The main policy considerations relating to the principle of development are set out by Policy 2 of the Local Plan, which states that development will be permitted where it contributes to the sustainability of the islands' environment, economy or local communities through conserving or enhancing the existing buildings on the islands.
- 6.3 The Local Plan sets out a presumption in favour of conserving existing buildings. The works proposed, whose impacts will be detailed later, will allow appropriately for this conservation and thus demonstrates that the development is acceptable in accordance with Policy 1.
- 6.4 Furthermore, the only new build elements of the scheme are the addition of a workshop and a new porch to provide a connection between the two buildings, where one is not currently present. The increase in the floor area will be of a minimal extent, with the extension serving to provide space for a workshop and connecting the two existing buildings on site respectively.
- 6.5 The reduction in the number of bedrooms as part of the development will ensure that the area for each bedroom is increased, allowing for a greater degree of space to be provided per occupant. The increase in the number of windows meanwhile will improve the level of sunlight that each bedroom will receive, to the amenity benefit of those using the bedrooms.
- Due to the works' conserving the islands' building stock and facilitating the effective use of existing buildings, the development is thus acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy 2 of the Local Plan.



Design

- As stated previously, the design of domestic extensions and alterations is a relevant factor in considering whether planning permission should be granted, in accordance with Policies 1 and 2 of the Local Plan, and the Design Guide.
- In terms of ensuring that there will be no impact on amenity of neighbouring properties, there is only a modest increase in the height of the dwelling (35cm provided by application P/20/026), thus preventing any issues of overshadowing, overbearing or overlooking.
- 6.9 Whilst the general footprint of the building will be increased, this increase will remain subservient to the existing buildings. The proposed extensions comprise the addition of a porch to connect the dwelling with the studio and the addition of a workshop at the side elevation of the studio. These changes, being of a small scale, would result in their being subservient to the original building.
- 6.10 The materials to be utilised meanwhile will be consistent with those recognised in the Design Guide as representative of the prevailing character of the Isles of Scilly. All of the windows will be wood sash whilst the render will be removed to expose the granite from which the original dwelling is constructed. The use of white-painted softwood timber matches conservatories and porches at other dwellings within the Isles of Scilly.
- Due to the design of the proposed works' being in keeping with both the character of the area and the character of the existing dwelling, the design principles of the development accord with the Local Plan, Emerging Local Plan, Framework and Design Guide.

Impact on AONB

- As the site is located within the AONB, the impact of development on the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the of the AONB needs to be considered, in accordance with Policy 1 of the Local Plan and Policy OE1 of the Emerging Plan, and also in the context of the Framework, Design Guide and Management Plan.
- 6.13 The Local Plan states that, within the AONB, the elements that need to be conserved/enhanced are natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. In terms



of natural beauty, there will being no removal of trees or other features which inform the natural beauty of the island, ensuring its conservation. The small scale of the works proposed also ensures that the dwelling will not be any more prominent, noting there being no increase in height, ensuring that important views will be conserved. The applicants also intend to reinforce the natural fences/hedgerow enclosing the site, further minimising outside visibility of new built fabric. There are therefore no disingenuous elements which would affect natural beauty.

- In terms of wildlife, naturally limited to inland species/habitats, the development will not materially impact any designated species, conserving these elements. The site is not situated within any known breeding grounds, as confirmed by Natural England's MAGIC Map which does not identify the site as being within an area where it is known there are protected inland species. By not being within such an area, the development will not impact any important wildlife designations within the Isles of Scilly. Nevertheless, suitable reports have been commissioned (through application P/20/026).
- 6.15 The existing character of the site, and how this will be affected, helps to determine whether the cultural heritage of the AONB will be conserved and/or enhanced. The outbuilding historically provided for a degree of self-sufficiency on the part of the occupiers however, as the outbuilding is currently in a dilapidated state and is of little use, this element has been effectively lost over time.
- In renovating the outbuilding, there will be a meaningful re-use of the building, including through the integration of an efficient new rainwater harvesting facility that will reduce the applicants' dependence on a shared local borehole. In promoting a higher degree of traditional self-sufficiency, the proposals will contribute positively to the cultural heritage of the AONB. As all of the important features as set out in the Local Plan will be either conserved or enhanced, the development thus accords with Policy 1 in terms of the impacts on the AONB.
- Additionally, the Management Plan notes that the historic environment of the AONB should be conserved. As the site is not in close proximity to the areas designated as historically significant on St Martin's, and due to the proposals'



- modest and extremely localised implications, the development will thus conserve the historic environment of the AONB.
- The Management Plan also notes that renewable energy provision needs to be sympathetic to the AONB designation, with this including domestic projects.

 This is relevant to this development because of the proposed solar panels on the roof. Due to their low-profile format and the small scale of the proposed works, particularly with there being no new build structures needed to support the panels, these works are sympathetic to the AONB.
- 6.19 Having regard to Paragraph 172 of the Framework, the above considerations in respect of natural beauty are highly relevant to the stated importance of conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. In the light of the proposals' limited scale and visual effect, and their conserving important buildings and landscape features, the development will meet the Framework's objectives in conserving the AONB.
- The proposed development will conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the AONB, while conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the same, in accordance with Local Plan policy and the considerations set out in the Framework. Paragraph 172 directs that 'Great weight' should be ascribed to this factor in the planning balance.

Impact on Conservation Area

- As the site is located within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area, the impact of development on the character of the Conservation Area needs to be considered, in accordance with Policy 1 of the Local Plan and Policy OE7 of the Emerging Plan, along with the Framework, Section 72(1) of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act and Design Guide, to ensure that character or appearance is preserved or enhanced.
- The Design Guide specifically notes that, in view of the Conservation Area's designation covering the islands, the Planning Authority will assess whether a proposal to alter or extend a building will harm its character or setting. In this instance, the character of the building will be preserved, explained hereafter, and in preserving its setting through their containment the proposals satisfy the requirements of the Design Guide in this respect.



- As clarified in the Emerging Local Plan and Design Guide, applicants should ensure that the materials used as part of development are in keeping with the Conservation Area. Specific materials that have been deemed to be inappropriate for the Conservation Area include uPVC, whilst original materials for dwellings are encouraged to be used as much as possible.
- In this instance, the new and re-exposed materials proposed including granite stonework, wood sash windows and hit and miss boarding will be in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling and the wider area of St Martin's. Furthermore, the softwood timber, painted white, to be used for the porch matches many local conservatories and porches for other properties both on St Martin's and throughout the Isles of Scilly. As a result, the materials contribute to the Conservation Area's preservation.
- The Framework defines the setting of a heritage asset as "the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral." The containment of the development is such that its impacts will not be perceptible from the wider setting of the Conservation Area in any respect, thus appropriately conserving setting.
- The emerging Local Plan and the Framework identify that not all buildings within the Conservation Area contribute to its important character and significance.

 The draft SPD notes the buildings of local significance for St Martin's, stating that, aside from the listed buildings and scheduled monuments, the only building of local significance is Fred's Barn. As the proposed development will not impact Fred's Barn due to the distance and lack of inter-visibility between the two, it will not impact this building of significance.
- 6.27 The current condition of the dwelling and outbuilding, being in a state of disrepair, significantly reduces their respective contributions to the significance of the Conservation Area. The works to the buildings, and the materials comprised therein, will serve to enhance the character of the Conservation Area by complementing the buildings themselves. The works proposed will augment



a vernacular dwelling that has currently fallen into a state of disrepair, securing a positive outcome in terms of its long-term maintenance.

- The proposed works will not only serve to protect the building's future custodianship, but they will also make the dwelling more in keeping with the character of the area. This will be through elements such as the removal of render to expose underlying granite, as stone facing is an identified quality of dwellings within this area, and the replacement of the windows. By enhancing the building, the development will increase its contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The use of timber for the proposed addition to the dwelling and for the windows meanwhile is also consistent with materials cited in the draft SPD as traditional in the Conservation Area. By reinforcing such finishes and avoiding unsympathetic materials, such as uPVC, the character of the Conservation Area is again preserved.
- In terms of the wider character of the Conservation Area, the Emerging Local Plan notes key considerations as the context of the site and surroundings in terms of important buildings, spaces, landscapes, walls, trees and views into or out of the area. As boundary walls and trees will not be impacted by the proposed works, along with there being no important buildings on site, these elements of the Conservation Area will be conserved. In terms of views into and out of the area, these will be enhanced at a localised level. Due to the current degree of disrepair the existing view into the site contains elements that detract the significance of the Conservation Area that will be remedied through the proposed development.
- As the proposed works will preserve the character and significance of the Conservation Area, the development is thus acceptable in accordance with the Local Plan, Emerging Local Plan, Framework and Design Guide. The development also ensures that the statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as set out in Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act is met. Again, 'great weight' should be afforded in the planning balance to the proposals' conserving the historic environment.





7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of a greenhouse/ store into a studio, alterations to the existing dwelling, addition of a workshop and porch at Trevean, Higher Town, St Martin's.
- 7.2 By virtue of the small scale of the development, and the proposed works' being in character with both the existing dwelling and the wider area of St Martin's, the development will ensure the conservation and enhancement of the identified qualities of the AONB and Conservation Area.
- 7.3 This Statement has reviewed the relevant Development Plan Policy Framework as it applies in this case, together with the other material considerations. On the evidence presented it has been demonstrated that the proposal accords with all relevant Development Plan policies and national guidance, and there are no other material considerations present to override them.
- 7.4 It is therefore urged that the local planning authority grant planning permission for this sustainable development.

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Project Management



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