

## Introduction and Background

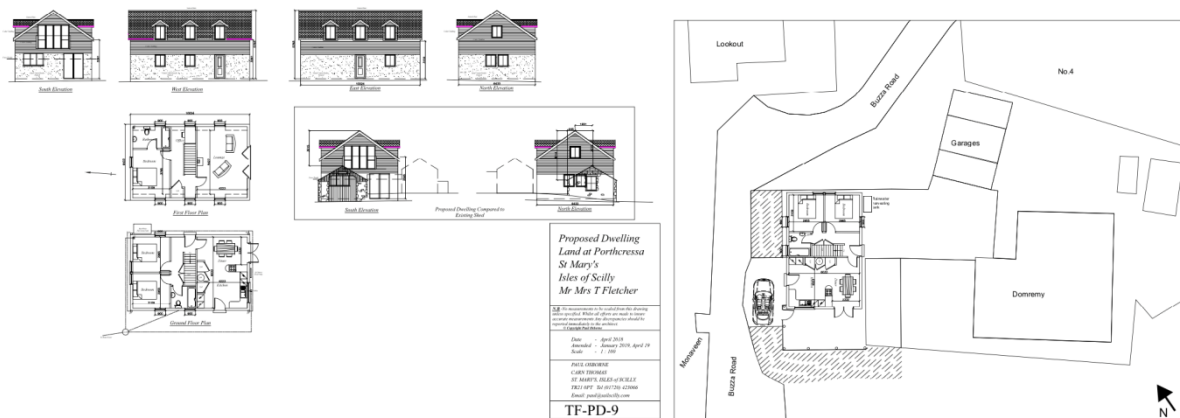
This statement is for the current proposal at the site, Buzza Garage, Buzza Rd, St Marys, Isles of Scilly, which looks to demolish the existing single-storey garage and to construct a new two-storey, two/three bed dwelling on the site.

The current site is of an irregular 'L' shape roughly aligned along the SE to NW axis, where Hospital Lane converges with Buzza Road, just to the North West of the prominence of Buzza Hill. Buzza Garage Site is one of two single-storey 'garages/boatsheds' situated between a terrace of homes to the North West of the site and detached dwellings that wrap around the site from the North to North East. To the South of the site the topography falls away across Buzza Road and Hospital Lane to Council-maintained green space before dropping down to the sea level and Porthcressa Beach.



1. Google Earth image of Buzza Garage, Buzza Road, St Marys, Isles of Scilly

The garage part of the plot has a long history of planning applications dating back to 1973. Under application P1224 submitted in 1973 for the provision of a dwelling, which was refused on grounds of overdevelopment. In 1975 under application P1421 permission was sought for the provision of a house and garage, which was refused on the grounds that it was overdevelopment and there were insufficient water resources. In 1981 under application P1977 permission was sought for the provision of a dwelling and garage. This application was also refused on the grounds it was overdevelopment of the site. In 1987 under application P2621 permission was sought for the provision to build a 2-bed house and this application too was refused on the grounds that it contravened policy No.3A of the Approved Isles of Scilly Structure Plan and was overdevelopment. An appeal was brought to this decision, which was dismissed in 1988. The Applicant of this 2020 application attempted to seek approval for a dwelling in 2016. P/16/129. This was also refused. Since this 2016 refusal the Applicant, acting on the advice of members of the planning committee has since purchased the adjacent plot (formally the garden to Charlie's Cottage), which has over doubled the area of the original garage plot.



Plans and Elevations from application P/19/020/FUL, Withdrawn.

In 2019 the application P/19/020/FUL sought approval for a replacement of existing garage with dwelling house. The application was withdrawn as recommended by planning as it was proposed to be refused on the grounds of:

**R1.** *The proposal would result in overdevelopment of the site and by its scale and massing, would appear unacceptably overbearing and dominant.*

**R2.** *The proposed development, by reason of its cramped appearance in the street-scene and proximity to the site boundaries would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area...*

It is important to note that the Applicant's have been working pro-actively with Planning in an attempt to find a proposal that can hopefully be supported. They withdrew the application at the advice of Planning with the view of attempting to find a new way of looking at the site to overcome the issues of the 2019 application and the numerous previous. The Applicant's appointed Studio West Architects Ltd, specialists in Cornish contextual yet environmental focussed design in 2019 to help to consider the site. This new application is a result of that commission. For the purposes of background and reference it is important to set out the planning considerations of the withdrawn application from The Officers report following 'Members' meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019 recommending application refusal so as to set the scene for the site and planning constraints that have played as a brief for this new proposal. On from the principle points of the refusal R1 and R2 mentioned above the report also contained the following.

**The Council's Infrastructure Department** responded that the application looks to tie into the existing sewer mains outside 'The Lookout' in an existing manhole that recently had been connected to, 5 yrs prior, and there have been no callouts to blockages or problems with the proposed connection point.

**The Council's Infrastructure Department/SWW** also commented that there was an existing mains water connection to the current garage on site and re-utilising this connection was acceptable.

**Highways** commented that the correct width of the highway running next to the site was hard to determine since there was no record of accurate measurements of the Council-maintained green space.

**Cornwall Fire Service** raised no objection to the development subject to the road width remaining unaltered.

**Planning Policy (NPPF)** Points were made to the application in relation to

- Paragraph 48, authorities give weight to relevant policies according to stage of preparation of the emerging plans
- Chapter 11, making effective use of land, supporting development on under-utilised land and buildings, especially if it meets identified needs for housing.
- Chapter 12, Achieving well-designed places, good design key to sustainable development
- Chapter 15, Conservation or Enhancement of environment
- Paragraph 175, avoid where possible significant harm to biodiversity through development.

**Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2005**

- Policy 1, development must respect and protect the recognised quality of the island's natural, archaeological, historic and built environment.
- Policy 2, proposals positively relate to the character of the landscape, seascape and built form of the islands
- Policy 3, new housing to meet the housing needs of the islands to promote sustainable communities
- All dwellings should be sited adjacent to or integrated within an existing settlement or established group of dwellings.

**Draft Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015-2030**

- Policy SS1 Principles of Sustainable Development
- Policy SS2 Sustainable Quality Design and Place-Making
- Policy SS6 Water and Waste Water Management
- Policy SS10 Travel and Transport
- Policy OE1 Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape and Seascape
- Policy OE2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy LC1 Isles of Scilly Housing Strategy to 2030
- Policy LC3 Balanced Housing Stock

While the Draft Plan is yet to be adopted, and such policies it contains can only be given limited weight, it is important to ensure everyone is fully aware of the relevant policies proposed moving forward.

**Isles of Scilly Design Guide 2007** 'It is important that the nature of the surrounding area is understood and reflected in any development proposal.'

## Planning Assessment

The main planning issues were considered to be whether the impact of the proposed development is acceptable in principle. Policy 2 of the Adopted Local Plan states developments should facilitate *'the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings for the economic, social and environmental benefit of the islands and the local communities...'* Further, Policy LC1 of the draft Local Plan states all new homes must contribute towards the creation of a sustainable, balanced and inclusive island community by making a positive contribution to addressing local housing needs. In accordance with Policy 3, the proposal sought to provide a new build dwelling with an occupancy restriction in order to meet an identified local need in perpetuity, and this is considered to be acceptable in principle and complies with the relevant local and national policy. Also since the proposal appears able to connect to the mains public sewer and mains water supply, these matters are not under consideration.

In relation to the siting, scale and massing of the proposal, Policy 2 of the adopted Local Plan states development will be permitted where it conserves or enhances the landscape, coastlines, seascape and existing buildings of the island through appropriate design...

*Massing and scale are important aspects of good design and creating developments of appropriate proportion. To a certain extent, the scale of development should be relative to the existing surroundings and should echo the pattern of traditional buildings in the area.*

This was not achieved in the previous proposal that did not acknowledge the primary orientation of dwellings in the vicinity (aside of Domremy) with long elevations and ridges running east west for south facing orientation to Porthcressa Beach and open space. The previous application due to its orientation had windows looking east and west towards nearby property. The proposed in this application respects this context character and neighbours east and west with no overlooking on those aspects.

*'The proposal, PA/19/020, provides amenity space sufficient given the additional land acquired for the site, but the design still was at odds with the existing character.... (AND) deemed the proposed 'would have an increased impact on the immediate area which would impact on the general amenity of the site as well as the amenity enjoyed by the surrounding properties as a direct result of its prominence... Whilst Officers recognise the need to support development of brownfield sites, this cannot be at the expense of high quality design, the protection of landscape character or the amenity of neighbouring dwellings. On this basis the proposal is considered unacceptable by virtue of its scale and massing.'* *'Due to the nature of the site and specifically the layout of the proposed development, Officers remain concerned that the proposed development, by virtue of its relationship with existing boundaries and proximity to the highway still constitute overdevelopment of the site...'* While the proposed utilised natural materials in accordance with the Design Guide and Policy 2 of the Adopted Local Plan, the dwelling on PA/19/020 would still appear to be *'cramped in this location as such not be considered to*

*represent high standard of design and layout*, contrary to Policy 2 of Local Plan. Even considering the noted objections, it was also noted by the Planning Agents that there was no objection to the principle of a one and half storey dwelling.

The new proposal, the subject of this application, despite being brownfield is of high quality design and of environmental and technical merit while being fully informed in massing and form by the context and historical context, all characteristics of the work of Award Winning Cornish Architectural Practice - Studio West Architects Ltd. In addition, the new design has respect to neighbouring dwellings with no over looking proposed.

### **AONB and Conservation Area Impact (On the previous now withdrawn Proposal)**

*'Whilst there is some consistency with surrounding groups of dwellings, the design and appearance does not demonstrate any particular local distinctiveness which should be reinforced and does not reinforce the established character of the area.'* The proposal was deemed to be dominant and not considered to conserve or enhance the character of the area. This is now addressed in the new design.

### **Impact upon The Natural and Historic Environment**

It was noted the proximity of the site, over 60 metres away, to a Scheduled prehistoric entrance grave on Buzz Hill (DCO554; MCO30225) and its proximity to a Listed Building, Wahroonga on Porthcressa Terrace (DCO14271). Given these proximities, it was proposed to impose a condition to ensure the groundworks are monitored in respect to these Natural and Historic assets. Following the submission of the last application, two ecological surveys were submitted, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) and Presence or Absence Survey Report. Both reports confirmed that there was no evidence of the site providing a current active bat roost. The ecologist confirmed that no further reports were required and that subject to conditions controlling avoidance measures during demolition and construction phase and mitigation and enhancement in the form of provision of new potential roost sites then there would be limited. Overall, subject to the inclusion of the precautionary conditions the application was considered to comply with Policy 1 of the Adopted Local Plan 2005 and Policies SS2 and OE2 of the Draft Local Plan 2015-2030.

### **Impact Upon Residential amenity**

It was determined, in relation to the design Guide notes, proposed developments located close to the boundaries of the site may cause a loss of privacy due to the placement of certain features, such as windows, adjacent to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties. It was noted that the placement of the proposed windows on application PA/19/020 would give rise to overlooking towards existing residential properties, thus harming the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties, Monaveen, Penventon and Charlie's Cottage. Furthermore the proposed design conflicts with NPPF paragraph 130, which seeks to secure a good standard of design. The new proposed design addresses these concerns.



### **Impact on Highway Safety**

Consultation determined that the application site was located in a sustainable location close to the shops and services of St Mary's and there is no requirement on development to provide for off-street car parking, as this is available nearby. It was stated that it is not essential for development in such a sustainable location to have dedicated off-street car parking.

### **Conclusion (On Previous Withdrawn Application)**

*'Whilst the proposed dwelling is seeking to meet an identified local housing need, which is acceptable in principle, it is unfortunate the site is not capable of accommodating a development of the scale proposed. Therefore, having regard to the considered overdevelopment of the site coupled with the impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, it is therefore recommended that the application is refused planning permission for the reasons considered above and as set out in Appendix A below.*

### **Appendix A – Reasons for Refusal**

**R1.** The proposal would result in overdevelopment of the site and by virtue of its scale and massing, would appear unacceptably overbearing and dominant when viewed from Penventon, Monaveen and Domremy, contrary to the Isles of Scilly Adopted Local Plan (2005), and to the guidance set out in the Isles of Scilly adopted Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2006) and emerging Policy SS2 (1) a), c), d) of the Draft Isles of Scilly Local Plan (Pre-submission (Regulation 19) Public Consultation) 2015-2030.

**R2.** The proposed development, by reason of its cramped appearance in the streetscene and proximity to the site boundaries would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and, if permitted, would be likely to set a pattern for similar undesirable proposals in the vicinity, resulting in a retrograde lowering of the spatial standards to which the area is presently developed, thereby contrary to Policy 1 the Isles of Scilly Adopted Local Plan (2005) and the guidance set out in the Isles of Scilly adopted Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2006) and emerging Policy OE7 (5) of the Draft Isles of Scilly Local Plan (Pre-submission (Regulation 19) Public Consultation) 2015-2030.

## Local Character – Built Form and Materials

The built context in the immediate surround of Buzza Garage is varied in date, form, aesthetic, layout and orientation. However the primary orientation is for buildings running east west and with long elevations south towards open space and Porthcressa Beach.

Please see Photos below.



Neighbouring Properties; Monaveen, Penventon and Charlie's Cottage terrace west of site, The Lookout detached property North of site.



Neighbouring Garage/Boatshed and Domremy to east of site. View of site from The Lookout. Buzza Road Terrace on approach to site.

The site lays on the 'Y' of Buzza Road and Hospital Lane, a small area of residential development to the South East of the centre of Hugh Town, overlooking Porthcressa Beach. To the west of the site across Buzza Road, the site is flanked by a terrace of three cottages, Monaveen, Penventon (both C19) and the recently built Charlie's Cottage. Each of the properties has been extended, both through ground floor conservatories and extensions along with first floor additions to Monaveen and Penventon. Monaveen has a ground floor upvc and exposed concrete block conservatory that runs longer than the main building abutting the ground floor extension for Penventon, along with a flat roofed extension to the rear. Charlie's Cottage is a new build in the style of the original cottage it replaced. The original character of the terrace west of the site has been nearly completely hidden behind ill-considered extensions, with only the rebuilt Charlie's Cottage resembling the original style frontage. The extensions have filled most of the original roadside gardens with only a small portion of the original granite garden wall remaining on the north end of the terrace.

Further up Buzza Road lies The Lookout, to the north of the site. The Lookout, and also Domremy to the east, are of mid C20 construction being a 2 storey white rendered walls, white upvc windows and doors and a natural slate roof. The garden to The Lookout is walled with horizontal timber fencing painted white. Domremy consists of white painted render with natural slate roof, varied white and brown upvc windows and a two storey flat roofed modern extension facing the site. Immediately to the east of the site before Domremy is another single storey block constructed boatshed/garage with clay pan tiled roof.

The interspersed dwellings around the site have muddled the traditional vernacular material and built form context. Because of the modern additions, the Local character and materials used are varied and inconsistent. There is a pre-dominance of the post 60s developments, modern detached buildings scattered within the vicinity of the site to the north and east, consisting of painted render/granite two storey buildings with slate or clay tiled principal roofs. To the west of the site are more traditional C19 slate roofed terraced homes but with modern extensions/interventions, all on an axis of orientation roughly running North East/South West.



Block Plan of Buzza Garage Site

### Period Development

There are of course quite a few period buildings that have retained their original and traditional material form in and around Hugh Town, but the character in the area around Buzza Road has been adversely affected by numerous modern C20 builds and extensions. Good examples of the immediate local character are illustrated in context photographs above.

### Agricultural & Landscape Context

The Buzza Garage site is on the South/South East side of the development cur tillage of Hugh Town before the prominence of Buzza Hill and the agricultural fields beyond. The entirety of the area/island is a Conservation Area and included in the AONB. The relationship of the site between the main developed areas of Hugh Town and the outlying fields can be seen in the aerial photograph included in the introduction of this document.



## Design

The reason for highlighting the existing varied built context and use of materials within such an important area of planning designation are to fully put forward the respect for traditional vernacular built form and material context that is fully at the heart of this proposal. Strongly and passionately respected by the Applicants as instructed to be implemented in the brief for this design is a complete respect for the local building vernacular and wider context.

Other primary aspirations for this house are to employ a contemporary desire to connect the inside with the outside, to promote healthy living with natural light, and good physical connection to outside. This, coupled with life-cycle considerations of providing adequate number of habitable rooms/bedrooms necessitated by modern living in such a remote area dictates aspects to be considered as framework for design criteria. The Applicants' need to plan for potential growth of the family, consideration for working from home, a room for potential visitors and the flexibility to adjust to changes to lifestyle as the Applicants age. Additional consideration needs to be made for potential future owners throughout the building's lifecycle. During the design of the dwelling it was determined the past applications had created conflicts with the neighbouring properties as a result of non-contextual design. The proposed building crowded the sites boundaries, the form and massing were inappropriate in the setting and orientation of the building on the site caused conflicts with the neighbouring properties' amenities. Great care was taken in the design process of the current application for a proposed dwelling for the site in order to mitigate the issues raised in the consultation with Planning following the refusal of the 2019 now withdrawn application.

Due to the irregular shape and size of the site, the traditional rectangular 'four up four down' design of a dwelling cannot work on this site. A more nuanced, site specific 'L' shaped building was chosen to more sympathetically sit in the site with the main massing of the building reoriented along the NE/SW axis. The use of traditional pitched slate on the main roof of the dwelling further lessens the prominence of the first floor facing the terrace to the west of the property. This along with 'stepping' back the first floor portion of the building on the approach reduces the impact of the frontage's form and has redistributed the massing where the impact will be the least.

In addition to reducing the dominance of the structure through breaking the form, the aesthetic use of materials in the design of the building has been implemented to soften the building's form through use of sympathetic natural materials that bed into the landscape; this breaks up the building's massing on the elevations through the use of varying materials that minimise any issues can arise from monolithic facades. The walls to the building are to be a mixture of materials synonymous to the islands and Cornwall as a whole; random granite, vertical and horizontal timber cladding and painted render. The various materials of this minimised pallet of materials have played part of the local building vernacular throughout the evolving history of the islands. The pitched main roof is to be in

clipped natural slate, slate in keeping with traditional use and clipped as a response to the exposed coastal nature of site. The flat roof portion over the ground floor is to be finished in sedum as a way of mitigating the surface run-off on the site while also minimising the visual impact of the roof through utilising a diffuse natural covering. The small first floor parapeted flat roof will be outside any sight line and is to be dark grey EPDM/Single-ply.

The contemporary use of materials in design looks to complement the traditional context through well-considered modern aesthetic values. That said, behind the modern aesthetic use of materials in cladding buildings, lies additional benefits to the sustainability of the building derived from modern energy efficient building techniques and technically advanced materials.

Another issue with the previous application was the extent of overlooking on neighbouring properties. Through the creative use of high-level and low-level windows, orientation and massing of glazing along South East elevation, the current design has mitigated issues of overlooking while still affording the property healthy levels of natural lighting and passive solar gains. Windows to habitable rooms along the South West elevation have been removed completely with just one high level window to the utility room. On the North West elevation high level windows and one low level window have been utilised to give natural light without causing issues of overlooking toward The Lookout. A similar approach was taken on the North East elevation with the low level window facing Domremy. The majority of the buildings glazing have been concentrated on the South East elevation to fully take advantage of the uninterrupted views out towards Porthcressa Beach and to benefit from passive solar gain. Care was taken at the design stage to ensure the sight lines out of the habitable spaces didn't infringe on the habitable spaces in the neighbouring dwellings.

In relation to the sizing of the property, due consideration was taken in relation to The NDSS, National Described Space Standard, which sets out *minimum* standards for space afforded to properties at defined levels of occupancy. The Isles of Scilly's new Local Plan, yet to be adopted, calls for the *maximum* afforded space for new dwellings to be no more than +10m<sup>2</sup> over the nationally described *minimum* acceptable internal floor space as defined by the NDSS. The base minimum standard set out by the guide for a 3 bed room home with the potential of 3 double bedrooms is set at 102m<sup>2</sup>. While the property is technically a 2 bedroom dwelling with an office/study, for the purposes of the assessment according to the NDSS, the dwelling would be categorised as a 3b5p. This measure is purely for the accounting of the minimum required space in relation to Table 1 of NDSS and as outlined in "6. Relating internal space to the number of bed spaces is a means for classification for assessment purposes only when designing new homes and seeking planning approval... It does not imply actual occupancy, or define the minimum for any room in a dwelling to be used for a specific purpose other than in complying with this standard". The proposal's internal floor area is 110m<sup>2</sup>, just 8m<sup>2</sup> over the *minimum* standard specified by the NDSS and within the limits identified by The Local Planning Authority as the *maximum* standard for the Isles of Scilly.

### Site Analysis

In depth site analysis and contextual consideration has been undertaken at the very outset of design considerations for the latest proposed design for a dwelling on the site. The design focus has been to provide comfortable internal spaces with views, respect the amenities of the neighbours, enhance the local building vernacular, all while embracing a South East aspect for passive gains and on site solar energy generation. The proposed Plan's form has been influenced by this analysis married with the contextual design considerations specific to the site.

### Sustainability

The Applicants wish is for this house to be a low energy building, employing passive design techniques and also the current advancements of on-site renewable technology. Similarly, construction advancements of air-tight and energy efficient fabric throughout the building, while at the same time respecting local form and materials. Sustainability on the Isles of Scilly has been a due consideration for all new builds and is reflected in the repurposing of the granite for use in the new build along with utilising sustainable sources and low 'net carbon' building materials where possible.

The site analysis helped to form site (building) lines to respond to the sites best aspects and with south passive solar gains. On site renewables will also be employed. A PV array is proposed on the South East portion main roof pitch. The PV array will also have a switch to re-direct excess generation to heat water for heating and domestic hot water usage. The building will be constructed using highly thermally efficient and air-tight construction with robust thermal detailing to create a low carbon impact, contextually sensitive dwelling with built in longevity to sustain this as a family dwelling for generations.

### Access

Access to the site will be pedestrian through the main gate entrance off Buzza Road. Comments back from Highways on the preceding application have indicated that there is no requirement for on site parking since locally there is parking available nearby. Once on site, pedestrian access to the dwelling will be on level paving with flush door thresholds in compliance with DDA requirements and in line with the life-cycle considerations for the proposed dwelling.

## PLANNING STATEMENT

### Sustainability

As explained above, a low carbon dwelling with well naturally lit spaces for a healthy living environment are at the heart of this application and is fully encouraged and supported in the NPPF.

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') has been used to inform this design proposal.

**National Planning Policy Framework**

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development

Section 11: Making effective use of land

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The proposal also embodies other recommendations from:

**The Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2005,**

Policy 2 Sustainable Development

Policy 3 Housing

**The Isles of Scilly Design Guide 2006,****The Isles of Scilly Design Guide 2015-2030** (Final draft, unadopted),**Nationally Described Space Standard****Conclusion**

This is a unique dwelling of technical and architectural merit, designed to be visually contextual within the site's surrounds and so in harmony with the local building vernacular and materials. It is modest in scale, within the  $\pm 10m^2$  variation to the NDSS's specified minimum standards for dwelling size allowed by Isles of Scilly Design Guide. The design has been fully considered through site analysis to best consider aspects for views and natural gains, weather protection and also a respectful consideration of the surrounding buildings. It is contextual in its response to form and material yet with a modern edge in respect of the spirit of the industrial and technological advances which have characterised the area to make it so distinct. Furthermore, the design was envisioned with respect to making a building for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the obvious relevance of that to 'now'.

**Closing Conclusion**

The Applicant's desire is applaudable, to make this a building of architectural and environmental technical merit and at the same time unify the form and materiality in harmony with its contextual surroundings. Throughout the UK such admirable schemes are approved and constructed, adding new and contemporary benchmarks to the ever-evolving portfolio of design in the built environment. The Isles of Scilly should also benefit architecturally from such a vision. We feel most passionately for the sake of architecture that such a scheme should be approved and celebrated, as is the case elsewhere throughout the country.