

Men-a-Vaur
Main Street, Poundon
Buckinghamshire
27th October 2020

The Planning Officer
IOS Council
Town Hall
St Mary's
Isles of Scilly

Application: P/20/054 Buzza Boatshed

I wish to object to the latest planning application.

Managing two Porth Cressa properties on this Heritage Coast (the second oldest in England) on which this development would lie, I find the amendments do not address the issues of substance posed by this development. A luxury house that would be marketed as a 'dreamhouse' by any estate agent on this premium site, with its sensitivity and history, conflicts with many areas of the Local Plan and planning guidelines. Well summed up by the Council's EIA Screening Report when it answers YES to the question '*Does it affect a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location?*'. Indeed it does.

To highlight a few examples

- 1) the unacceptable take (over 75%) of a greenfield site
- 2) the size and dominance of a luxury home having a negative impact on a sensitive landscape in an AONB Conservation area
- 3) no account is taken of the value of the existing landscape and its contribution to Scilly's heritage and economy, nor the historic nature of the building and site with its potential to add economic value
- 4) little meaningful consultation and opinion taken in its planning

Precedent:

Precedent was one of the reasons for refusal of the last application. An even greater precedent will be set by the current application.

The amendments do nothing to change the enlarged footprint, now spreading over two distinct sites, 1) a brownfield site (old boatshed) and 2) a greenfield site (including sections of Mr Child's garden).

The footprint takes in over 75% of a greenfield site, an unusual and unacceptable level especially in an AONB. The footprint, amounting to over 40% of the combined brownfield and greenfield sites (considerably greater if Domremy's access is discounted), is damaging enough, but more relevant is the serious loss of 75% of a greenfield site.

Any garden lying within the 'Built Up Boundary', and therefore designated as a greenfield site, is recognised as having special added value. Development of this intensity on such sites is generally discouraged and exceptional. And this proposal has the additional component of being in a designated AONB. Obviously, this would result in a significant loss of birds, mammals and insects in this vicinity.

Granting this application would set an even worse precedent than the previous application. It would encourage similar extensions onto greenfield sites. The resulting loss of habitat for wildlife and biodiversity would be dramatic and significantly change the landscape within the 'Built Up Boundary' of Hughtown.

Recognition and consideration of this greenfield site in line with the Local Plan is essential, in particular in protecting the integrity of the AONB.

Economic consideration:

The National Policy Framework (NPPf C12 para126) asks local authorities to take into account *"the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation"*

The value of the landscape has been well documented. Anyone versed in local tourism and the islands' visitors, together with those living in the locality, will understand just how much this special corner of Porth Cressa is appreciated. The loss of the old boatshed and site, to be replaced by a dominating, modern luxury home, will reduce the tourism experience and have knock on economic consequences. Even more so if the destruction of this historic building and site goes on to set a precedent resulting in Scilly losing even more of its precious history and landscape.

The post WW11 rebuild of this historic boat shed is the last remnant of many that once were a feature of Porth Cressa's shoreline, as can be seen in the photos below. The boatshed is an important relic and reminder of Scilly's maritime history.



It is well recognised that one of the main attractions drawing visitors to Scilly is its heritage and history. The boatshed, site and aspect are a valuable component of this heritage. They have even greater potential should the site and boatshed be restored or even just presented in a tidy manner.

Demolishing an economic asset to replace it with a large, for this site, luxury home, makes little sense and runs contrary to IOSC planning policy. I am not aware that there has been any consultation or consideration of the economic implications with regard to planning policy. Not even with the AONB business partner, Island Partnership.

Curiously, this historic boatshed and site were dismissed in an earlier, rather misleading report as merely an eyesore without any mention that this is purely the consequence of neglect by the present owner, the applicant. And critically, it does not have to be that way. Bearing in mind these boatsheds often were never especially pretty!

No fair and reasonable decision could be made without considering the economic value of the site.



Heritage Coast and consultation:

The proportions and overbearing nature of this luxury home would downgrade this site, part of the islands' heritage, defined as belonging to a Heritage Coast. One of the stated prime objectives of IOSC policy on Heritage and Cultural Strategy is *"to assist the local community to identify with the rich heritage and traditions ... to engender a sense of ownership and participation in the policy making process"*. Eradicating this site and demolishing this historic building, a remnant of a long running Scilly tradition, runs completely contrary with this policy.

Rather the council should be protecting the islands' heritage not approving its destruction.

The boatshed and site are presently unlisted BUT the IOSC Local Plan (Historic Environment) goes on to say *"there are a very high number of non-designated heritage assetsnon -designated heritage assets will be identified as part of the planning application process ... in order for the significance of both designated and undesignated heritage assets to be fully conserved and enhanced, the setting of these assets must also be fully considered as part of that significance"*.

The Council's report acknowledges that lack of resources has prevented many eligible buildings being listed. Both the building and setting have yet to be assessed in line with this policy. They should be.

The Council's own Shoreline Report recognises the important relationship the coast has with *"Recreation and Amenity in supporting tourism being 85 % of the islands' income"*.

While there are no statutory requirements to consult with Historic England or Natural England, if an application runs contrary to Planning Policy at the very least opinion from these bodies should be taken.

Paragraph 114 of Natural England's National Policy Framework, local authorities should, " ... protect and enhance distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast"

The absence of proper consultation and consideration, not helped by the refusal of the applicant to engage with any of the local people affected by this proposal, has probably led to the many conflicts

with the Local Plan and national guidelines; a plan that recognises the historic and sensitive nature of areas like this in Scilly. These amendments do nothing to address existing conflicts and the application should be rejected.

Alastair Partington