

Council of the Isles of Scilly Planning Application

Ref: P/21/018/FUL

Consultation Response

Date: 19th March 2021**Ref:** P/21/018/FUL**Site:** Blockhouse Cottages, Old Grimsby, Tresco**Proposal:** Demolition of existing row of cottages, construction of new replacement two storey 5/6 bedroom dwelling, single storey annexe, single storey studio outbuilding extension, and associated landscaping works.

You are being consulted on this application as you may wish to make comments before a decision is made. Should you wish to make any comments on this application, please complete the response form below and return to planning@scilly.gov.uk by 13th April 2021 or by post to the Planning Department, Town Hall, The Parade, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly TR21 0LW.

Link to application: <https://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning-application/planning-application-p21018>

I look forward to receiving your comments in due course. If I have not heard back from you by the 13th April 2021 then I will assume you have no comments to make.

Consultee Name: Cornwall Archaeological Unit

[Comments here](#)

Thank you for re-consulting us on this application. Further to our original consultation response we have consulted the submitted Statement of Significance (Lewellyn Harker Lowe April 2021) and the proposed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for historic building recording and archaeological recording (Johns 12/04/2021).

The Statement of Significance assesses the heritage significance of the Blockhouse Cottages establishing that they are non-designated heritage asset, and a good example of the Isles of Scilly vernacular of the mid-late 19th century – including their built form and detailing such as a shallow 30-degree roof pitch and granite rubble walls. The cottages are also distinctive in their adaptation to the exposure of their immediate location, with slit windows to the north elevation – an interesting and perhaps unusual example of this on the islands - and tall chimney stacks and caps which give a distinctive and unusual silhouette when viewed from elsewhere on the island and offshore.

The evidence presented in the Statement clearly demonstrates that the cottages are distinctive historic buildings, adapted to their exposed location and a good survival of the Isles of Scilly mid-late 19th century vernacular. While they are non-designated they make a positive, significant and valuable

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contribution to the historic character and significance of the Conservation Area and to the island of Tresco.

In the justification of the need to demolish the cottages, we consider that the Statement of Significance fails to present a convincing case. It states that the historic buildings detract from the aesthetic value of the Conservation Area, however, this is principally due to their present condition, poor maintenance and unsympathetic management in relation to their heritage values (with the insertion of UPVC windows and concrete render).

While the condition statement does provide a long list of repairs needed, as referred to in our original consultation response, we cannot find a reference within the document recommending the need to 'demolish' the cottages: there is no clear explanation that the costs are 'prohibitive' (as stated on page 7 of the Statement of Significance).

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that while, 'Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole'.

We consider that the proposed demolition of Blockhouse Cottages amounts to 'substantial harm' and should be considered under the guidance outlined in paragraph 195 of the NPPF due to the positive contribution the cottages make to the Conservation Area as a heritage asset, a good example of the local vernacular and with several characteristic features linked to the adaptation for their exposed position.

Paragraph 195 states, 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'

We consider that the submitted documents do not present a coherent or clear justification for the demolition of this non-designated heritage asset for all the elements outlined in Paragraph 195: The Cottages are an historic building, rich in historic character reflecting several attributes of the Isles of Scilly vernacular, and provide a significant positive contribution to the historic, aesthetic and landscape value of the Conservation Area.

Based on the significance of this heritage asset and the lack of justification for the proposal as set out in the submitted documentation we object to the current application. Instead, we would welcome a proposal that places the conservation and adaptation of the existing historic building and its distinctive

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historic character as its fundamental guiding principle, or, for consent to be granted, a convincing justification to be submitted which addresses all the elements of Paragraph 195 of the NPPF.

If this justification is submitted and accepted leading to consent being granted to demolish this non-designated heritage asset we consider that the submitted Written Scheme of Investigation is acceptable (and that a suitable condition be included in the decision to cover the recording), however, we refer to the guidance provided by Paragraph 199 of the NPPF which states in relation to recording, '... the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted'.

Name: Peter Dudley

Date: 29/04/2021