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Fiona Lauchlan

On behalf of Purcell ®

Old Police Station, 6 St Peter's Court,

Bedminster Parade, Bristol BS3 4AQ

fiona.lauchlan@purcelluk.com

www.purcelluk.com

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Council of the Isles of Scilly

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Town Hall, St Mary's
Isles of Scilly

Heritage Impact Assessment



April 2022

PORTICO
HERITAGE

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1 Introduction

- 1.1

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been commissioned by the Council of the Isles of Scilly to provide an understanding of the significance of the Grade II listed Town Hall, St Mary’s in order to inform proposals for its use as the Cultural Centre for the Isles of Scilly.
- 1.2

The report identifies the historic evolution of the site and its setting and identifies its heritage significance. It then considers the proposals and their impact on that heritage significance and how they comply with legislation, policy and guidance.
- 1.3

It should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement and plans prepared by Purcell.
- Author
- 1.4

The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Formerly a Director of Conservation at Alan Baxter & Associates, Nick spent nine years at Historic England as a Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas where he led a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects in East & South London. Previously Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor.

2 The site and its context

- 2.1

The following section provides a description of the existing site and its context. It also provides details of the site’s history and the significance of the site and context.
- The Site
- 2.2

The Town Hall is located in the centre of Hugh Town overlooking the Parade Ground and backing onto Porthcressa Road adjacent to Porthcressa beach.
- 2.3

As well as being the Islands’ Town Hall it also contains offices for the Council of the Isles of Scilly, and currently a temporary exhibition for the Isles of Scilly Museum.
- 2.4

The Council Chamber and Magistrates Court have not been used for their original function since 2002. The stage has not been used since 2017 and the hall since 2019.
- 2.5

The foyer and front entrance space has been the temporary home of the Museum since 2020.
- History¹
- 2.6

Hugh Town is the main urban centre on St Mary’s and the wider Isles of Scilly. It is located on a narrow isthmus which joins the Garrison (historically the Hugh) peninsula with the rest of St Mary’s.
- 2.7

During medieval times nearby Old Town was the main centre of population. The key elements of the medieval landscape: Ennor Castle, St Mary’s Church and the Old Quays, still form a coherent and visible group around Old Town Bay together with Old Town itself.
- 2.8

In 1570 Queen Elizabeth I granted the Godolphin family the lease of the Islands and for the next 215 years, except during the Civil War period, this Cornish family ‘owned’ Scilly. The Dukes of Leeds, heirs to the Godolphins, assumed the lease in 1785, reverting to the Crown in 1831.

¹ The history section of this report is drawn from a number of sources, including The Isles of Scilly Museum: Inside the Archipelago (2011); Laws, P (1980) The Buildings of Scilly; Madden, P (1996) Scilly’s Building Heritage

- 2.9 The Godolphins and Star Castle (built in just 18 months during the 1590s to ward off a second Spanish Armada) transformed Scilly. Law and order came to the islands. So did an influx of new residents from Cornwall. Houses were put up against the Garrison walls and a quay was built in 1601 as Hugh Town grew in size and strategic importance. As the military defences increased, The Hugh became known as The Garrison.
- 2.10 A new 99-year lease was taken on by Hertfordshire squire Augustus Smith in 1834. Smith lived in Scilly until his death in 1872. Imbued with notions of self-help, he took over from a regime of absentee landlords and lacklustre land agents. He found declining trade and failing crops supporting an inflated population on holdings split between all a family's surviving sons.
- 2.11 As Lord proprietor and Chief Magistrate, Smith re-allocated tenancies. He insisted that only the eldest son could succeed to land. The dispossessed found work on Smith's new projects or left the islands.
- 2.12 Smith forbade marriage unless a couple had a house of their own and made parents pay a penny a week for sending children to school, tuppence if they stayed at home.
- 2.13 In 1838 he built his home next to the old Abbey on Tresco, planted trees as wind breaks, thus creating Tresco Gardens from species brought home by Scillionian sea captains, and helped to organise and finance a local shipbuilding industry.



Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map 1875, before the Town Hall was constructed.

- 2.14 After the death of Augustus Smith in 1872 the Islands were inherited by his nephew, Thomas 'Algernon' Smith-Dorrien-Smith.
- 2.15 The Ordnance Survey Map of 1875 (figure 1) and the historic photograph (figure 2) shows how Augustus Smith would have found Hugh Town when he first inherited the role of Lord Proprietor.



Figure 2: Undated photograph of The Parade before the Town Hall was built © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 2.16 Hugh House, built as Officer's Mess in 1792 can be seen high on the Garrison Hill. It became the first residence of Augustus Smith before he moved across to Tresco Abbey² and now serves as the Duchy of Cornwall's Offices on the Islands.
- 2.17 The site of the Town Hall is directly in front of Hugh House and can be seen in the middle ground marked by the single storey gable end adjacent to what became the Spanish Ledge Guest House (now holiday apartments) to the right and Parade Cottage to the left. The Parade Gardens had not been laid out at this time.

Dorrien-Smith & Architecture

- 2.18 Following the death of Augustus Smith, Algernon Dorrien-Smith continued the work started by his Uncle, including the construction of a number of new buildings across the Islands.
- 2.19 Dorrien-Smith appears to have had a curious architectural quirk – a delight in chunky stonework³. This is to be seen, for example, in the use of huge unwrought blocks of granite for porches of cottages near New Grimsby Quay, and in the house, Rowsfield, on Middle Down in Tresco, built about 1897. It is also very visible on the principal High Street façade of the Post Office, bearing his initials and the date 1897. There the chunky stones have been used with great effect to form the quoins and lintels of the windows.



Figures 3&4: Rowsfields & the Post Office 1897

² Historic England List Description: 1141186
³ Laws, P (1980) The Buildings of Scilly

The Town Hall

- 2.20 Perhaps a forerunner to this architectural idiosyncrasy, the Town Hall was begun in 1887 and opened in 1889. A plaque inside records the name of the honorary architect as Mr J. Goodfellow.
- 2.21 The site of two structures were cleared to make way for the new structure, which can be seen in the 1875 OS Map (figure 1).
- 2.22 Originally a rectangular plan and two storeys in height, its classical style is reflected in its pedimented front, symmetrical window pattern, plinth and angle quoins. The windows and main entrance have keyed four-centre arches over timber sashes and a centrally positioned shield reads 'VR 1887' whilst over the front entrance is the cypher of Thomas Algernon Dorrien-Smith.
- 2.23 Materials used include squared and roughly coursed and snecked granite with hammer dressed details and stone copings to the gabled roof.



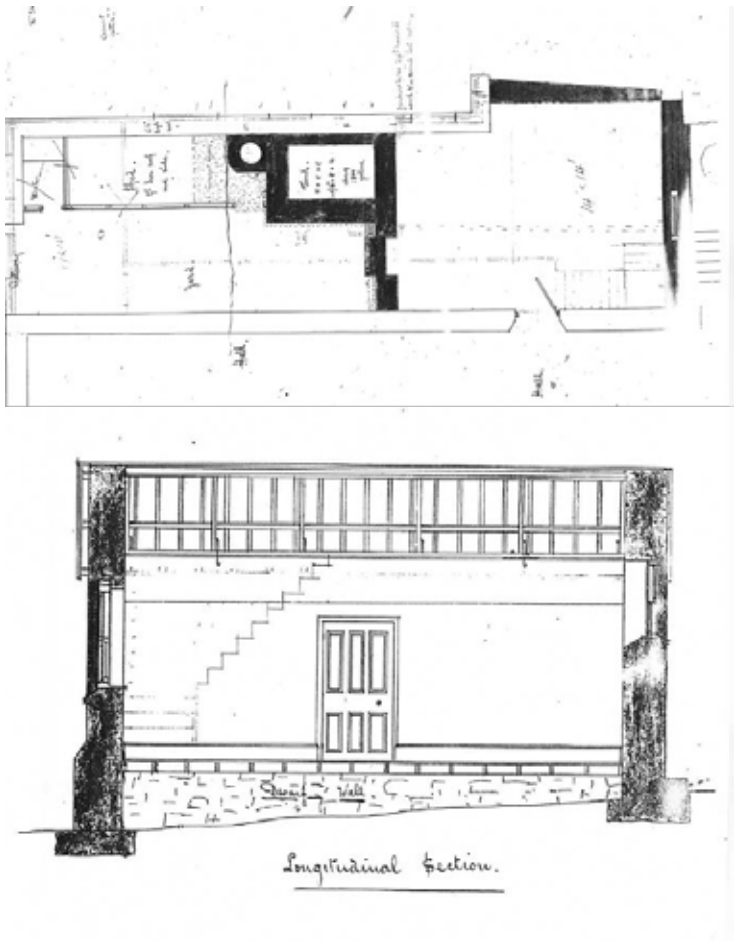
Figure 5: The Town Hall when newly completed © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 2.24 The Town Hall was multi-functional – serving as a public hall and theatre, Council Chamber and Magistrates Court.
- 2.25 As can be seen in figure 5, the building was originally a simple rectangle with just a small lean-to covering steps to the side entrance. Large windows flanked the sides of the hall, providing natural light.



Figure 6: Undated photograph shortly after construction of the Town Hall © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 2.26 The undated photograph in figure 6 shows how the adjacent remaining cottage (Parade Cottage) had to be 'joined' to the new structure after it was severed from its former neighbour.
- 2.27 By 1900 there must have been a requirement for additional accommodation at the building as plans were drawn up for a single-storey extension.



Figures 7&8: Plans for the single storey extension on the western side of the Town Hall

- 2.28 The extension sits just behind the original stone steps that accessed the side entrance to the Hall and remains today, subsumed into the later 1970s three storey extension and behind the modern entrance porch.
- 2.29 The following photographs show the same position in 1962 (on a visit by HM The Queen Mother), before the construction of the modern porch, and today.



Figures 9&10: The side entrance to the Town Hall in 1962 and today (2021)

2.30 The following Ordnance Survey extract from 1905 shows the town hall with the single storey extension to the west.



Figure 11: Ordnance Survey 1905

2.31 In 1970 a substantial extension was added to the western side of the building to create additional office space for the Council of the Isles of Scilly. This consumed the 1900 extension and stretched the length of the western elevation of the building.

- 2.32 Whilst the front elevation of the extension was given a partial granite stone dressing the windows are modern casements and the third floor is contained within a tall mansard, clad in artificial slate, with two large velux windows overlooking The Parade (figure 12).
- 2.33 To the side and rear the extension was rendered which whilst at least differentiating it from the original Town Hall building, overall detracted from the architectural qualities of the host building (figure 13).
- 2.34 The extension also required the blocking of all the original side windows to the Hall.



Figures 12&13: The 1970s extension on the western side of the Town Hall

Inside the Town Hall

- 2.35 As described earlier, from the outset the building was designed to be multi-functional serving as a public hall and theatre with a Council Chamber & magistrates court on the first floor at the front of the building.
- 2.36 It is perhaps because of this practical and functional requirement that the internal spaces in the building have seen so much alteration.
- 2.37 The ground floor entrance space had a market use and in the 20th century was occupied by a butcher. This meant that the main access to the chamber/court and hall above and behind was to the side.
- 2.38 There are very few details or images of the interior of the town hall, however figures 14 & 15 show the building at various times during the 20th century.



Figure 14: The Duke of Edinburgh in the Town Hall 1958 © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 2.39 The photograph of The Duke of Edinburgh shows him sitting in front of a particularly ornate fireplace, possibly in the former Council Chamber, with the coat of arms of the Stuart family above. The Latin motto '*semper eadem*' translates as 'always the same'. It is probable that this chimney piece was salvaged from elsewhere - and is now gone.
- 2.40 Today, the Council Chamber has been stripped of any original fixtures and fittings and is entirely plain.



Figure 15: The former chamber/magistrates court with modern ceiling tiles, strip lighting and modern fire surround (2021)

- 2.41 The former Chamber/Magistrates Court now has modern ceiling tiles, strip lighting and modern fire surround.
- 2.42 Due to the impossibility of creating appropriate access to the upper floor both the Council and the Magistrates Court have ceased to use the Chamber.
- 2.43 The main hall has similarly seen considerable alteration although still retains its main volume.



Figure 16: Toy Fair 1971 © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 2.44 Figure 16 shows the hall in use in 1971, looking towards the rear from the stage. A badminton court is painted onto the floor referencing its multi-functional use.
- 2.45 The western (right hand) windows have already been filled in.
- 2.46 The following images show the hall today. A large, incongruous heating vent (the top part of which would have been hidden behind a suspended ceiling) is visible. This now connects to the modern boiler room located on the eastern elevation of the hall.
- 2.47 The stage, a later addition, is situated at the southern end of the hall and is no longer used.



Figures 17 & 18: The main hall in 2021

- 2.48 Toilet facilities are accessed off the western side of the hall in the side extension. There is now only one remaining window providing natural light to the hall on the eastern side.

Parade Cottage and Former Spanish Ledge Guest House

- 2.49 Parade Cottage to the east and the former Guest House to the west are also Grade II listed and sits immediately adjacent to the Town Hall.



Figure 19: Parade Cottage (to the right) in the 1960s/70s © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 2.50 Parade Cottage comprises a small vernacular cottage that dates back to the late 18th/early 19th century⁴.
- 2.51 It is constructed of coursed granite rubble which is colourwashed, with some square stone to the front. It has a gabled slate roof with rendered left end chimney stack.
- 2.52 Internally it has a 2-room plan with central entry and staircase with a 20th century outshot to the rear.
- 2.53 The cottage has an exceptionally complete 19th century Scillionian interior including panelled doors, joists and plant and muntin partitions flanking the central stair⁵.
- 2.54 Whilst the cottage is now physically attached to the side of the Town Hall, the image in figure 6 (and compared to figure 2) illustrates that clearly there was an element of reconstruction at the time the Town Hall was built and its more historic neighbour was demolished.
- 2.55 To the rear is a small single storey structure that is likely to be contemporaneous with the cottage and also appears on the 1875 Ordnance Survey Map. It is listed Grade II in its own right.
- 2.56 The building is also of coursed granite rubble, with a gabled pantile roof and brick end stack. The original double entry is on the western elevation and the north gable has an inserted doorway. There is a fireplace to the south gable⁶.
- 2.57 The setting of Parade Cottage relates primarily to The Parade to the front, however, with the single storey shed to the rear, both also have a relationship with Porthcressa Road and Ingram's Opening. The significance of their setting relates more their contribution to the domestic townscape of Hugh Town than their relationship with the Town Hall – to which they have no specific connection other than physical.

⁴ Historic England List Description: 1141192

⁵ Historic England List Description: 1141192

⁶ Historic England List Description: 1291695



Figure 20: The rear of Parade Cottage and the Town Hall.

- 2.58 To the immediate west of the Town Hall are two early 19th century houses (now holiday lets, formerly the Spanish Ledge Guest House) which are of a grander scale and more formal architecture – symmetrically designed, 3 bays wide with central door and hipped half-dormers above.



Figure 21: Listed buildings immediately to the west of the Town Hall

- 2.59 Both buildings are of roughly coursed granite rubble. In contrast to Parade Cottage to the east, these houses reflect a higher status of both architecture and therefore original occupant.
- 2.60 Similar to Parade Cottage, the setting of the listed buildings relates more to the overall town centre – rather

than their physical relationship with the Town Hall – being representative of the other buildings in Hugh Town.

Wider Setting

- 2.61 As described earlier, the Town Hall sits at the western end of the former Parade Ground – now gardens - bounded by Lower Strand to the north and Church Street to the south.
- 2.62 The original open space can be seen in figures 2 & 6. By the turn of the 20th century the 1905 Ordnance Survey Map shows that it had been converted to gardens. (figure 11).
- 2.63 Surrounding the Parade Ground Gardens are terraces of individual houses, mostly two storeys many have attic floors and dormer windows facing the Gardens. As well as Parade Cottage, many of the houses are listed.
- 2.64 The Town Hall, at the western end, and the Scillionian Club at the north eastern are the exceptions to this scale, making them landmarks.
- 2.65 The houses are mostly constructed of coursed granite rubble/partially cut granite, with slate roofs. Some are now rendered.



Figures 21-24: buildings surrounding Parade Gardens, including the Town Hall and Scillionian Club

- 2.66 These buildings are all of significance in their own right – especially those that have been listed – as good examples of the domestic architecture of Isles of Scilly at different

points in its history. The contribution that setting makes to their significance is primarily as part of the overall urban context of Hugh Town, surrounding the former Parade Ground, now gardens. They form a characterful backdrop to this space and help to ensure the prominence and significance of the Town Hall in this context.

3 The heritage significance of the site and its context

- 3.1 The Town Hall is listed Grade II and lies within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area.
- 3.2 The Town Hall was listed in December 1992. The list description reads:
Town Hall. 1889, by J. Goodfellow. Squared and roughly coursed and snecked granite with hammer-dressed dressings; stone-coped gabled slate roof. Rectangular plan with gable to street. Classical style. Plinth, angle quoins and plat band to pedimented front of 2 storeys with symmetrical 3-window range. Keyed 4-centred arches over horned 2/2-pane sashes flanking similar tripartite sash to centre on ground floor; similar first-floor sashes set in raised architraves with similar arches and blocks to cills; similar arches over centre-hung 4-pane casements flanking shield with relief lettering reading VR/1887 to tympanum of pediment, which has dentil brackets to antefixae. West end has one arch-headed window. Altered interior. Included for group value.
- 3.3 There are a number of heritage assets in the vicinity and wider area, including Parade Cottage and its outbuilding, immediately adjacent to the east and the ‘Spanish Ledge Guest House and house attached at west’ which immediately abuts the Town Hall extension to the west – all of which are listed Grade II.
- 3.4 A number of other buildings around The Parade are also listed -all Grade II. These are highlighted on the map below – indicated by the blue triangles and can be seen in the photographs in figures 21-24.



Map 1: Statutory Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the Town Hall (2021)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

- 3.5 The nearest Scheduled Ancient Monuments are the Curtain Wall & Associated Defensive Structures on the periphery of The Garrison & the Round Cairn with funerary chamber on Buzza Hill – both some distance from the Town Hall.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 3.6 The Historic Environment Record identifies other sites of interest, extant, archaeological and/or demolished. The closest to the Town Hall, on The Parade, is an ‘undated findspot’ of ‘a small rounded stone, 0.4m high and 0.5m diameter with a hole in the top, somewhat resembling a small barrel’

Assessing heritage significance

- 3.7 The conservation area, listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments are ‘designated heritage assets’, whilst other structures (including those identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area) are ‘non-designated heritage assets’ as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 3.8 ‘Significance’ is defined in the NPPF as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. The Historic England ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ puts it slightly differently – as ‘the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest’.
- 3.9 ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ (English Heritage/Historic England, April 2008) describes a number of ‘heritage values’ that may be present in a ‘significant place’. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
- 3.10 The site, the listed and unlisted buildings nearby, and their relationship to one another and the conservation areas collectively illustrate the development of the Isles of Scilly.

Isles of Scilly Conservation Area

- 3.11 The significance, character and appearance of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area is embodied in the integration of the buildings and landscapes in Scilly and how its inhabitants have shaped the land over a long period.
- 3.12 The ‘historic interest’ to be found on the Isles of Scilly is well documented and the islands contain a remarkable abundance and variety of archaeological remains and thus ‘evidential value’ from over 4000 years of human activity.
- 3.13 The remote physical setting of the islands has lent a distinctive character to those remains, producing many unusual features important for the broad understanding of the social development of early communities.
- 3.14 The islands’ archaeological remains demonstrate clearly the gradually expanding size and range of contacts of their communities.
- 3.15 By the post-medieval period (from 1540), the islands occupied a nationally strategic location, resulting in an important concentration of defensive works reflecting the development of fortification methods and technology from the mid 16th to the 20th centuries.

- 3.16
- It was the construction of the defences at The Garrison (as well as other locations across the Islands) that directly and indirectly led to the growth of Hugh Town as the main urban and administrative centre of St Mary's and the Isles of Scilly. Similarly the encouragement of farming, flower growing and shipbuilding led to a growing of the economy and society.
- 3.17
- Within this context the Town Hall makes an important positive contribution to the conservation area as a prominent landmark in the town centre, overlooking The Parade – the key historic open space (now gardens) in Hugh Town.
- 3.18
- Its architectural presence signals its civic role and is an important element of the town and the Islands as a whole as envisaged and supported by the Dorrien-Smith family in the 19th century as they sought to bring law, order and good governance to the Islands.
- 3.19
- The contribution the Town Hall makes to the conservation area is lessened by the unsympathetic 1970s addition to its west and similarly the modern porch – although both are functionally important.
- 3.20
- Parade Cottage, its outbuilding and the other listed and unlisted buildings that surround the historic Parade Ground are important in their contribution to the evolution of Hugh Town and its townscape.
- 3.21
- Their domestic scale is important in giving further prominence to the Town Hall while the variety in architectural styles also reflects the status of Hugh Town as the commercial centre of a small population – combining houses of slightly grander aspiration, architectural proportion and detailing with others of a more humble and 'cottagey' scale.
- 3.22
- The relationship between the Town Hall and these buildings is an important element of the character of the conservation area.

The Town Hall

Historical & Communal Significance

- 3.23
- In terms of English Heritage⁷'s 'Conservation Principles' the buildings and conservation area provide us with 'evidence about past human activity' and, by means of their fabric, design and appearance, communicate information about its past.
- 3.24
- The historical and communal significance of the Town Hall is an important element of the civic evolution of the Islands as the Dorrien-Smith family sought to 'improve' the Islands.
- 3.25
- The different uses within the building are also important from a historical - and communal – perspective. The building was not only the setting for democracy to be played out in the Council Chamber, but also law and order, as the Magistrates Court, as well as entertainment in the main hall and market/butcher to the front. This multi-functionality meant the building will have played a part, at some point, in the lives of most islanders and perhaps many visitors.



Figure 20: Early 20th century Postcard © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 3.26
- The postcard in figure 20 is an example of the use of the Town Hall. The words on the front read:

⁷ Now Historic England

We were here [the Town Hall] to a social Wednesday evening I performed on my fiddle! Fancy! I can assure you it was not my fault...

- 3.27 The Town Hall often featured as a focal point for visits, such as those of the Duke of Edinburgh and The Queen Mother illustrated earlier, and the visit of Edward VII in 1902, below.



Figure 21: King Edward VII addressing a crowd outside the Town Hall in 1902 © Isles of Scilly Museum Archive

- 3.28 The civic function of the building was further expanded with the building of the Council Offices on the side of the Hall in 1970.
- 3.29 Unfortunately, the historical and communal value that can be attributed to the building has been considerably eroded in more recent years with the moving of the Council to the Wesleyan Chapel and the building no longer being used as the Magistrates Court.
- 3.30 The closing of the hall for theatre use has also further eroded the public use of the building.
- 3.31 Only the use of the offices by Council Officers and currently the temporary use of the ground floor front part of the building as the 'Museum on the Move' now connects the building to the Islanders and visitors it was built to serve.

Architectural & Aesthetic Significance

- 3.32 As well as the significance identified above, the Town Hall also possesses an element of architectural value – most

notably externally in its granite front elevation with its symmetrical plan, pedimented gable, and granite detailing celebrating both Queen Victoria with its date stone and also Thomas 'Algernon' Dorrien-Smith.

- 3.33 The architectural treatment gives the building its presence and prominence in the centre of Hugh Town overlooking the Parade.
- 3.34 Unfortunately, this is largely where the architectural 'special' interest of the building ends. The western side of the building has been compromised by the three storey 1970s extension, which runs from front to back along its flank, and the porch – which effectively hides the single storey side extension of 1900 with its granite carved window surround.



Figure 22: Rear of the Town Hall 2021

- 3.35 The rear of the Town Hall still reveals its simple original form, in granite blocks with rusticated quoins at the corners (figure 22) and there is a small porch that serves the back of the hall. However, the building has been compromised architecturally by the addition of the offices to the west and the boiler room to the east. Its setting is further compromised by the 'back of house' functions, recycling and parking – despite its prominent location overlooking Porthcressa Beach.

Internal Space

- 3.36 Internally, whilst most of the original spaces retain their plan form and volume, they have either lost all historic features and detailing, or have been heavily altered.
- 3.37 Nothing historic or 'of special interest' remains in the former Council Chamber/Magistrates Court (figure 15); adjoining office; ground floor market space (including its use during the mid-20th century as a butchers).
- 3.38 The main hall has lost all of its natural light except for a single glazed window at the south east corner. A large heating duct has been inserted, presumably at a point when a suspended ceiling was inserted. Whilst the subsequent removal of the suspended ceiling has revealed the original zig-zag tongue and groove ceiling, it has also revealed the heating system and also detrimentally altered the acoustics of the hall for practical use (figures 17&18).
- 3.39 The stage is no longer used.
- 3.40 The modern side extension has no architectural special interest at all being entirely functional.



Figures 23&24: Internal space in the side extension

- 3.41 Overall, the significance of the Town Hall lies primarily in its historic civic and communal role within the Isles of Scilly – providing a home to not just administrative, democratic and magistrate functions, but culture and entertainment. This was further bolstered with the

addition of the Council Offices in the 1970s. However in more recent years this role and function has gradually reduced – lessening its relevance to both Islanders and visitors.

- 3.42 Architecturally, its significance lies in its external 'presence' in the centre of the town – which is particularly emphasised by its form, the architectural quality of the front elevation and its prominence in The Parade.
- 3.43 This presence is let down by the quality of the 1970s addition and the porch as well as the building's setting to the rear, overlooking Porthcressa, although the 1970s extension does, nevertheless, still highlight the building's civic function in comparison to the surrounding domestic uses and scale.
- 3.44 Internally the building is much altered and there is very little of 'special interest' remaining other than a sense of the original plan form and some of the key volumes.

Setting of Town Hall

- 3.45 The setting of the Town Hall is of particular relevance to its significance because of its communal and symbolic role within Hugh Town and the wider Islands.
- 3.46 In this case, it is not just physical visibility that contributes to its setting, but also its civic 'presence'. Whilst the Town Hall extension is not of architectural quality, it does forms part of this presence in the centre of Hugh Town.
- 3.47 Its immediate setting has been discussed above in relation to its prominent position and formal architectural presence on The Parade.
- 3.48 It is visible from across the Gardens, with the lower scale and massing of the surrounding buildings giving it further prominence.



Figure 25: The Town Hall across the Parade Gardens

- 3.49 Views of the rear of the building are of much less importance. Whilst the scale, massing and form of the building is still legible, it does not display its civic role in the same way and the quality and level of detailing is much less. This has been further eroded by the alterations made and also the quality of the public realm around Porthcressa Road.
- 3.50 Due to its civic relevance, views of the building from further afield are also of some (lesser) importance. This includes from Hugh House on the edge of The Garrison and also from Buzza Hill.



Figures 26&27: The Town Hall from in front of Hugh House and from The Garrison

- 3.51 The photographs show that whilst the Town Hall and extension are discernible (with the extension roof more prominent in views from the west) the complex largely merges in to the roofscape of the town. The church is far more prominent at the eastern end of Hugh Town.



Figure 28: View from Buzza Hill

- 3.52 Similarly from Buzza Hill, whilst it is the Town Hall roof that is more discernible, the building still forms part of the overall town and roofscape of Hugh Town rather than being especially prominent in its own right.

3.53 Thus, whilst views of the Town Hall, and an appreciation of its presence, are important elements of its setting, views into Hugh Town from east and west are of less importance due to the building largely being seen as part of the overall urban form and roofscape of the town.

The Parade

- 3.54 As described earlier, there are a number of listed (and unlisted) buildings in the vicinity of the Town Hall that are significant in their own right and also contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area as well as the setting of the Town Hall.
- 3.55 Of particular relevance is Parade Cottage and its associated outbuilding, to the east of the Town Hall, which are an important remnant of the late 18th/early 19th century expansion of Hugh Town. The simple buildings typify the vernacular style of cottage and outbuildings on the Islands and retains some important historic and architectural features internally.
- 3.56 The historic photographs show that the cottage underwent some alterations at the time the Town Hall was constructed, but this has not lessened its interest.
- 3.57 The outbuilding, located just to the south on Ingram's Opening also retains much of its outward character.
- 3.58 To the front, the cottage retains its town setting – created at the time the Town Hall was constructed - and sits as part of the wider townscape of The Parade.
- 3.59 The rear of the cottage has been altered with a 20th century outshut and the setting of the cottage and outbuilding from behind has been much altered by the construction of the boiler room and creation of parking/recycling space behind the Town Hall and on Silver Street.
- 3.60 To the west of the Town Hall, the two early 19th century houses (now holiday lets) are of a grander scale and more formal architecture – symmetrically designed, 3 bays wide with central door and hipped dormers above. They contribute to the town-centre character of The Parade,

conservation area and Town Hall, along with the other nearby buildings.

- 3.61 The other listed and unlisted buildings around The Parade and on Porthcressa Road further reflect the urban, but small scale, character of Hugh Town.

4 The proposed scheme and its effect

- 4.1 This section of the report briefly describes the proposed scheme and its effect on the heritage significance described earlier. This section should be read in conjunction with the architect's drawings and Design & Access Statement which provide a comprehensive description and rationale for the proposals.
- The proposed scheme
- 4.2 The application seeks permission for the creation of a new home for the Museum with the addition of a performance space and supporting facilities that create a combined heritage and cultural centre for the Isles of Scilly and to serve both the Island's resident communities and visitors. The third key element of the proposals is provision of Café/Bar with associated facilities.
- 4.3 The proposals necessarily require the comprehensive reconfiguration of the building to create appropriate access, facilities and accommodation.
- 4.4 This unavoidably requires the loss of some original fabric and the loss of a number of original features and staircases. It will also change the external appearance of the existing 70s extension.
- 4.5 The proposals have been drawn up with a detailed understanding of the building's significance, both architecturally and historically. This analysis has clearly identified that whilst its historic/communal value is of special interest, much of the physical fixtures and fittings internally are either functional, modern or 'standard' – rather than 'special'. To achieve a sustainable and optimum viable use for the future this distinction has been an important factor in the design process.
- 4.6 The proposals have sought to ensure that the key volumes and hierarchy of the spaces are retained and that where fabric is affected it is of less significance.

Internal Alterations

The Town Hall

- 4.7 It is proposed that the existing main hall will retain its volume and status as the new performance hall whilst the magistrates/council chamber will be converted to exhibition space.
- 4.8 The location of the existing entrance will remain broadly similar, and the entrance area will be opened up to gain a full appreciation (and access) to the space. A new staircase will lead up to a top-lit gallery which could spectacularly display the Klondyke gig in front of the full-height display of birds.
- 4.9 This 'new' space will be created from the back of the old stage and thus not impact on the volume of the existing main hall.
- 4.10 The main hall will be given back its original purpose with modern facilities, seating and access. The stage will be 'turned around' to be positioned on the rear wall creating the much-needed accessible and modern Performance Hall.
- 4.11 Along the walls of the hall, galleries are to be created to provide both additional seating and also circulation space at first floor level. Access to the galleries will be provided through the currently blocked-up window openings – linking the performance space with the new café and new meeting/activity and exhibition space.
- 4.12 The former magistrates/council chamber and adjoining office will be opened up to create exhibition space overlooking The Parade.
- 4.13 A new staircase will be created in the 1970s extension that will link all the floors.
- 4.14 A 'new' second floor will be created at the front of the town hall building, in front of the performance space – effectively in the eaves of the building. This will provide necessary back-of-house accommodation for volunteers etc. There is currently no accommodation in this space at the moment, being just a void above the existing first floor.

1970s extension

- 4.15 The existing 1970s extension will be entirely re-configured to provide a new staircase, activity/meeting and WC and a dedicated archive facility for the extensive museum collection. Also, importantly, at roof level, the extension will house the primary plant and heat exchangers for the proposed air-to-air heat pumps. This is an important part of the overall sustainability strategy for the new complex allowing a move away from carbon fuels to electricity.

New Extension

- 4.16 On the eastern side of the Town Hall the existing boiler/plant room is to be replaced with a new two storey extension that will house a bar/café with views over Porthcressa Beach to the south. It will connect at ground and first floor level to the Performance Hall through the existing (blocked up) window openings. This element of the proposal is important for the financial viability of the project.

External Alterations

The Town Hall

- 4.17 The changes to the exterior appearance of the original town hall will be almost imperceptible. Its dominant gabled granite frontage will remain the prominent feature on The Parade, sitting forward and proud of the adjacent buildings. This is particularly important in views when approaching from the north west, where this frontage and flagpole will remain the immediate and notable feature.
- 4.18 To the rear, similarly, the dominant granite façade will remain largely unchanged except for the introduction of a discrete level-access entrance through an existing blind arch.
- 4.19 Photovoltaic tiles will be incorporated into the slate roof, enhancing the sustainability of the building. These will be largely unseen, on the elevation that is otherwise shielded by the side extension.

1970s extension

- 4.20 The existing 1970s extension will be almost entirely re-worked with a new slate roof profile to accommodate the

roof-top plant required for the air-to-air heat source equipment. Its narrow street elevations to the north and south will be significantly improved with a granite base to the ground floor, vertical timber profiled boarding above and new fenestration with a contemporary but appropriately vertical expression.

New Extension

- 4.21 The new extension to the east will sit behind Parade Cottage and be of a similar architectural language to that of the re-modelled 1970s extension, except with a seamed zinc sheet roof. The two bays will step down from the town hall – visually opening up views of the side of the town hall and also stepping down towards Ingram's Opening and the listed Parade Cottage and outbuilding.
- 4.22 The extension will not only provide secondary, level, access to the building but connect the building visually to Porthcressa Road and beach - providing a structure of high quality that can activate a currently unkempt and dead part of the public realm.

Impact on the heritage significance of the listed building, conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings

- 4.23 Internally, the proposals will undoubtedly cause a considerable amount of 'change' to the building including the removal of original physical fabric and the loss of the former magistrates court/council chamber and stair at first floor. However, in reality this fabric is largely of little interest in its own right and the bones of the original plan form will be retained through the ground floor entrance space and first floor exhibition space to the front of the building and the volume of the performance space to the rear.
- 4.24 The proposals will, however, allow for the continued use of the building as one of community importance, giving it uses relevant to both Islanders and visitors – as was the original purpose and a key element of its significance.
- 4.25 Externally there will be little impact on any physical fabric of significance with the main front and rear elevations of the Town Hall remaining entirely intact. However, there

- will clearly also be an impact on both the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings.
- 4.26 The extensions will also change the setting of the original Town Hall building – but in a complimentary way.
- 4.27 The most important architectural element of the original building will remain the prominent feature in many views.
- 4.28 Even where the proposed additions are prominent in their own right they will not compete with the granite solidity and presence of the original building – instead forming a complimentary cluster that signals the whole complex is of civic importance.
- 4.29 The extended roof of the existing town hall extension will be considerably higher than the existing roof, however it will be set back from The Parade and the main facade so visually its scale will be reduced – and where visible will be a beacon of sustainability.
- 4.30 The new extensions on the eastern side reflect the gable ended form of the town hall, stepping down towards Ingram's Opening, so providing a complimentary form that sits comfortably alongside the granite elevation of the original building.
- 4.31 Currently views of the eastern elevation of the Town Hall – adjacent to Porthcressa Beach - are filled by the large boiler/plant room and the car park/bin stores. The new extension will activate this space with character and life, providing level access to the building and offering views over the beach.
- 4.32 The overall impact on the setting of the listed Town Hall will be positive. The existing 1970s extension currently detracts from the significance of the historic building and the site of the new extension an unwelcoming area for bins and cars. The new and refurbished structures will be of high quality materials that will complement the town hall and creates a new unified cultural hub that reflects not just its historical importance but also the sustainable aspirations of the Islands.

- The impact on the setting of other nearby listed buildings
- 4.33 The proposed extension will sit directly behind Grade II listed Parade Cottage and it's adjoining out building. Due to its scale it will be prominently visible behind the listed buildings in views from The Parade which will have a potentially negative effect on an ability to appreciate the cottage in its original setting.
- 4.34 However, as has been illustrated earlier in this report, the setting of the cottage has already changed considerably – with the building of the existing town hall. The proposed additional change to its setting should be seen in this context.
- Other listed buildings in the vicinity*
- 4.35 As described in the earlier sections, the contribution that setting makes to the significance of other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity – the majority of which surround the Parade Gardens – relates primarily to their collective contribution to the Square – their scale, materials and form. This includes the adjacent former Spanish Ledge Guest House to the west. The town hall has always been a prominent and differently scaled element – reflecting its civic status, with the existing 1970s extension detracting from both the town hall and the setting of surrounding buildings.
- 4.36 This contrast will remain un-changed with the proposals in terms of their relationship – if anything the enhancements to the 1970s extension will enhance their setting where they are seen within the same context.
- The Conservation Area
- 4.37 The effect on the conservation area will be similar to that described above. The centre of Hugh Town is made up of domestic, commercial, and civic buildings and the differentiation is often articulated through the scale and architecture of the buildings.
- 4.38 The Town Hall has a rightly dominant position within the centre of the town. This will be visually retained with its repaired and restored granite front (and rear) elevations remaining the most prominent elevations facing the

street. The proposed extensions and alterations will contribute a high-quality piece of architecture to the town and conservation area that both reflects its collective status as a new cultural centre for the Islands whilst still allowing the existing Town Hall building to retain its primacy.

- 4.39 Even from further afield – particularly from the Garrison and from Buzza Hill – where views across the town are possible – the proposed buildings will sit comfortably as part of the overall townscape. The use of slates for the 70s addition roof extension will mean that it blends with the other slate roofs – including that of the town hall - whilst the zinc roof to the new extension will also share its colour palette and compliment the surrounding buildings.

Conclusions

- 4.40 Overall, whilst the proposals involve a comprehensive re-purposing of the Town Hall and its 1970s extension, the effect will be a beneficial one. The 'new' complex will be relevant, fit-for-purpose, economically viable, sustainable and complimentary to the significance and purpose of the listed building.
- 4.41 The proposals may cause an element of less-than-substantial harm to a number of the heritage assets: the loss of some historic fabric within the Town Hall, its setting and that of the adjacent Parade Cottage through the scale of the proposed new roof. However, this must be considered and balanced within the context of the considerable public benefits that the scheme will deliver.
- 4.42 These benefits have been considered above and are also outlined in the Design & Access Statement:
- The Town Hall's original principal space, the Hall, is being retained both in its original function and physically with its proportions, volume and its visible roof structure and construction effectively unchanged.
 - The proposed new balconies will enhance the hall visually and provide additional seating essential to its financial viability. The blocked original granite dressed stone openings will be re-opened to link the hall with

its side spaces, provide circulation and draw light from the adjacent spaces.

- The front and rear original elevations will remain unchanged but their masonry and joinery will be cleaned, repaired and redecorated.
 - The 1970's utilitarian extension will be enhanced with a new roof and re-designed elevations that sit better visually with the adjacent granite elevations of the original building.
 - The new extension to the south-east of the Hall will make better use of an important focal space in the town, currently used for waste re-cycling and parking. It will help the building better address the wonderful aspect of Porthcressa Beach. In addition, it will provide space for important functions such as the café, bar and foyer and the Klondyke display that will contribute to the Hall's future viability.
 - New environmentally efficient servicing will allow the removal of the unsightly internal flue running up through the hall and the external boiler house and will help achieve future sustainability goals of net zero-carbon and reduction in the use of fossil fuels.
 - The principal changes to the original Hall's existing fabric will be the insertion of a rooflight for the light well, slight raising of the slate coverings to allow ventilation and insulation of the roof, removal of some secondary internal partitions to create more flexible exhibition areas and re-opening of a number of the original hall windows.
- 4.43 Overall, the benefits arising from the proposals will help to secure the long term sustainability and future of the listed building and ensure that a key element of its significance and contribution to Hugh Town and Island life can be perpetuated.

5 Compliance with policy and guidance

- 5.1 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of the Town Hall and its context, as required by Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the report also describes how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance. The effect is, overall, positive and for that reason, the scheme complies with policy and guidance.
- 5.2 The proposed scheme, in our considered view, preserves the special interest of the listed building, preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings, and thus complies with S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- The National Planning Policy Framework
- 5.3 In respect of Paragraph 197 of the NPPF the proposals very clearly 'seek to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; recognise the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness'.
- As outlined in Appendix A, the NPPF identifies two levels of potential 'harm' that might be caused to a heritage asset by a development: 'substantial harm...or total loss of significance' or 'less than substantial'. Both levels of harm must be caused to a *designated* heritage asset – in this instance the Town Hall, the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.
- 5.4
- The proposal meet the requirements of Paragraphs 200-202. The proposals clearly do not cause substantial harm to the significance of any designated heritage assets – the key elements of all heritage assets remains in tact and legible.
- 5.5

- 5.6 It is possible that the proposals will cause a small element of less-than-substantial harm to the significance of a number of assets, however this harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.7 For the reasons given earlier in this, and other submitted reports, we believe that the benefits of the proposals clearly outweigh any identified harm.
- The Council of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan
- 5.8 In positively addressing the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the works also meet the policy requirements of the Council of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan relevant to the historic built environment.
- 5.9 In terms of Strategic Objective OE7 the proposals will ensure that the historic environment 'continues to contribute to the special character and identify and quality of life of the Isles of Scilly'; importantly and very uniquely the proposals will 'increase public understanding, awareness and enjoyment of and access to our heritage for both residents and visitors'. They will 'support the vital tourist economy of the islands, recognising that heritage is a key element'; and 'ensure that the historic environment is used as a key driver and focus for inward investment, regeneration and re-development, particularly within the islands' settlements'. The proposals will also enable the 'creation and support for strong partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors'.
- 5.10 In conclusion, we believe that the proposals meet the legislative, national and local policy requirements for the historic built environment.

Appendix A – Policy Context

Any proposals for the site must have regard for national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Section 66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting. Section 72(1) of the Act requires decision makers with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay 'special attention... to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

The legislation governing Scheduled Ancient Monuments is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

The National Planning Policy Framework

The revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2021.

Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework deals with design: Achieving well-designed places. It begins:

'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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process' (paragraph 126).

Paragraph 130 advises that 'planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' deals with Heritage Assets describing them as 'an irreplaceable resource' that 'should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'.⁸

Proposals affecting heritage assets

Paragraph 194 brings the NPPF in line with statute and case law on listed buildings and conservation areas. It says that:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'

⁸ The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

In terms of the local authority, paragraph 195 requires that they 'identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.'

Further, 'Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision (paragraph 196).

Paragraph 197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Considering potential impacts

Paragraph 199 advises local planning authorities that '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.

Paragraph 200 continues, 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.'

In terms of proposed development that will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, paragraph 201 states that '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'.

It continues 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use' (paragraph 202).

In taking into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset the local authority should employ a 'a balanced judgement' in regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 203).

The NPPF introduces the requirement that 'Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred (paragraph 204).

⁹ Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

Where a heritage asset is to be lost, the developer will be required to 'record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible' (paragraph 205).¹⁰

In terms of enhancing the setting of heritage assets the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. (paragraph 206).

It goes on however that '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' (paragraph 207).

Finally, paragraph 208 requires that the onus will be on local planning authorities to 'assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies'.

Local Policy: Council of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015-2030

The Council of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan was adopted in November March 2021.

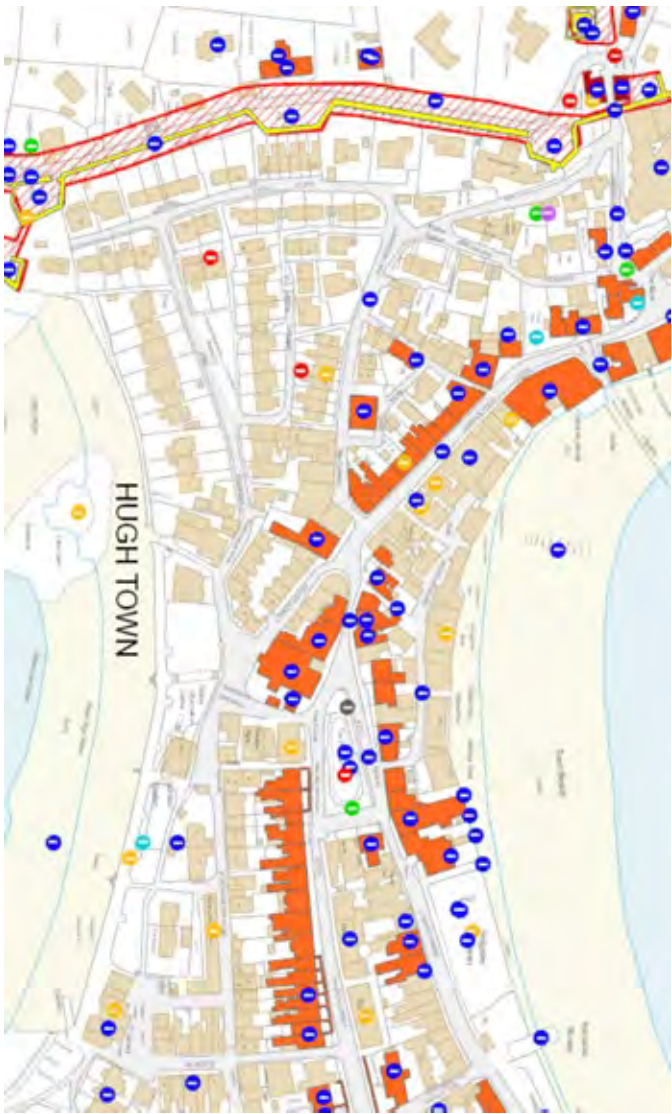
Policy OE7 relates to Development affecting Heritage.

¹⁰ Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

Appendix B – Historic Environment Record Maps

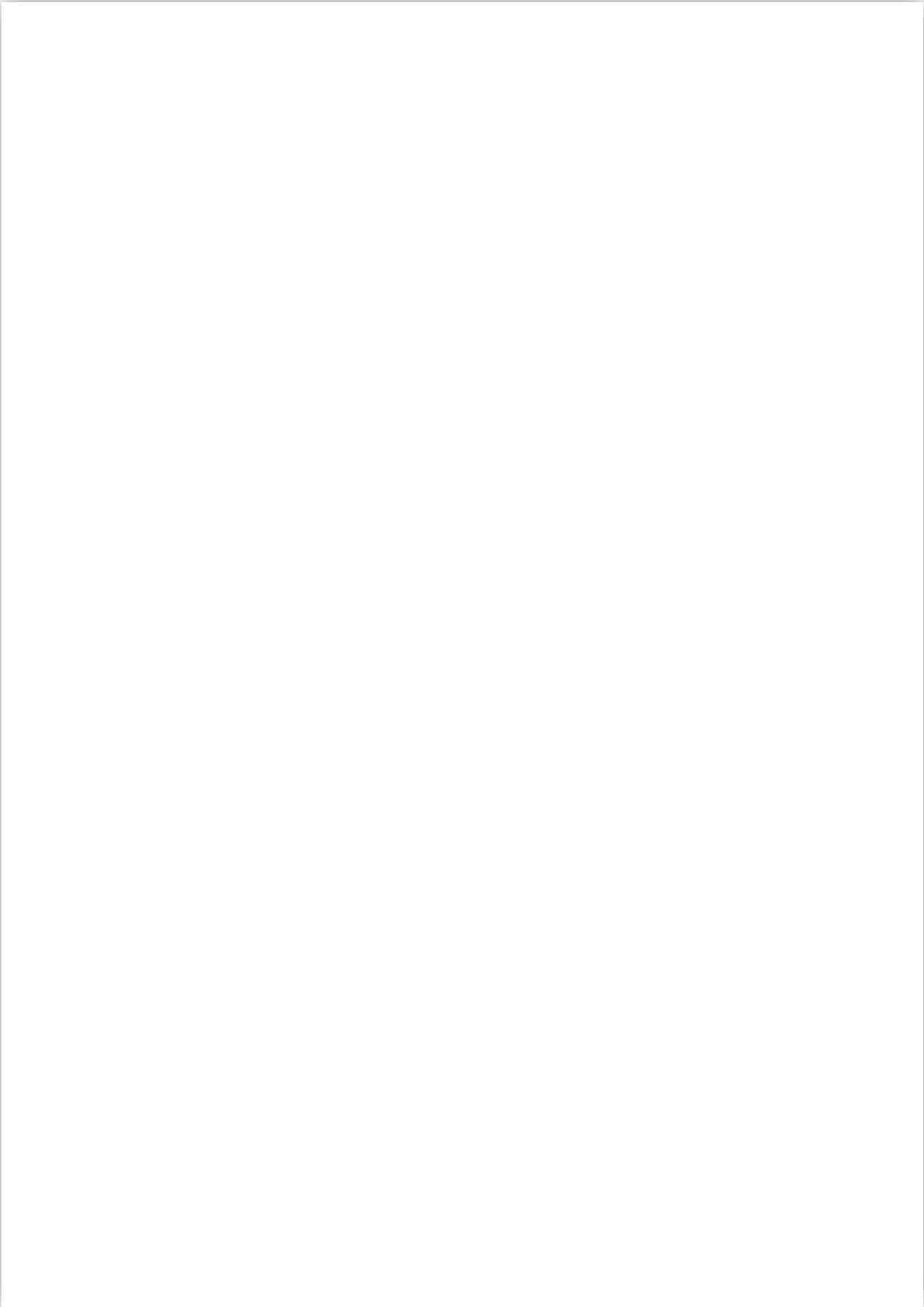
Immediate and Wider Context

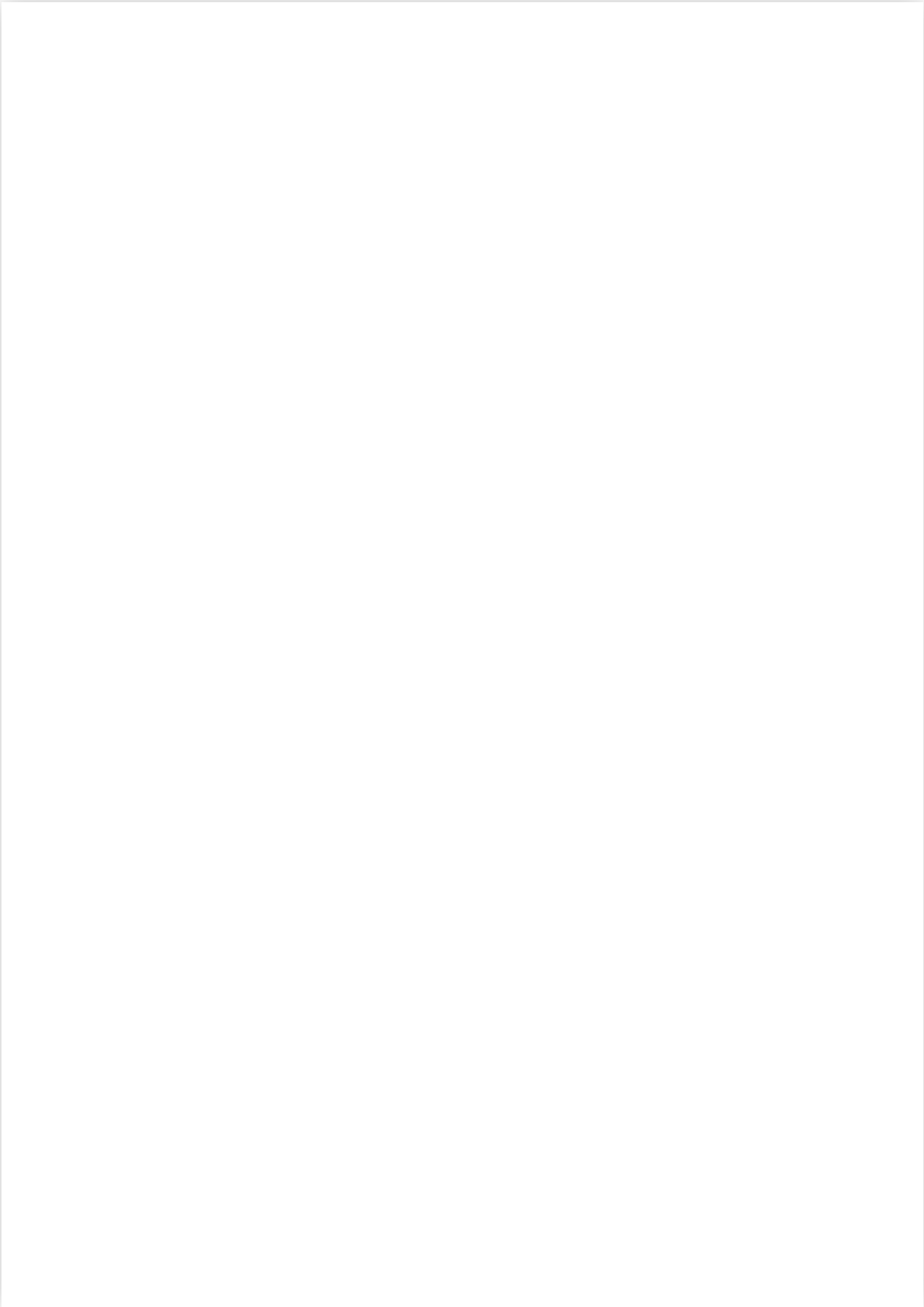
Orange: Statutory Listed Building; Red/hatched: Scheduled Ancient Monument; Red, blue, green dots: identified sites on HER



Town Hall, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly : Heritage Impact Assessment









Isles of Scilly Town Hall 22 April 2022
Access Review of Proposals and Existing Facilities at Planning
Submission Stage

A/ Introduction

The Isles of Scilly Town Hall Project will repurpose the existing Town Hall in Hugh Town, St Mary’s, to provide a new museum and performance space.

Section B of this report reviews the proposed plans for remodelling and extending the Town Hall building, as shown in drawings by Purcell Architects, issued in April 2022. The report focuses on circulation and physical access, as well as sensory and cognitive disability. Recommendations will be expanded to cover more detail during later stages of the design process.

Section C of the report is a review of disabled access on approach and within the existing Town Hall.

The Appendix of this report sets out the relevant legislation and guidance. Note that throughout the report “AD M2” and “AD K” refer to Building Regulations Approved Documents Part M (Volume 2) and Part K.

Important aspects needing clarification before next design stage

The following features need to be clarified:

- Will the central external door entrance from Church Street into the exhibition space (which currently has one step) be a public entrance?
- Will the entrance from Silver Street be a service entrance, and not a public entrance?
- Wheelchair accessible seating positions should be shown in the hall at ground floor level and on the balcony, to provide wheelchair users a choice of location. Any positions should have access to a means of escape route. AD M2 states that for an auditorium with 132 seats there should be 2 permanent and 4 removable wheelchair positions.

- Fire protected routes and the locations of safe wheelchair refuges should be reviewed following consultation with a fire expert, especially on the upper floors, for instance from the second floor volunteer area.

Building description

The Town Hall is a Grade II listed Victorian building, owned and managed by the Council of the Isles of Scilly . It is located in the centre of Hugh Town, between the Town Beach situated to the north of the town centre and Porthcressa Beach immediately to the south. The main stone structure was built in 1887-1889 and runs north-south between Church Street and Silver Street. It has outbuildings on the eastern side and a 20th century three-storey extension on the western side.

It currently houses a small museum entered from Church Street, a hall (used until recently for performances and events and with another entrance from Silver Street), and office and meeting spaces for council staff.

Outline of proposals

The proposals will demolish the later extensions on both sides of the existing building, leaving the original stone block, containing the single storey hall and the two-storey portion with attic rooms above, which includes the first floor former council chamber.

On the west side of this block, a new three storey extension will contain the museum entrance/shop from Church Street and ancillary accommodation (e.g. WCs) at ground floor level. Exhibition and archive rooms will be located on the upper floors.

On the east side, a new two storey extension will be constructed, which will house museum exhibits, including the pilot gig suspended from the ceiling. There will be cafe/bar counters on each floor, so it will double up as a café during the day and as foyer spaces when performances or events occur in the hall.

The hall will be re orientated so that the stage will be at the south end of the building. A new balcony will be inserted, with its floor level with the former first floor council chamber and also with the new first floors of the east and west extensions.

Vertical circulation will be via a new passenger lift, connecting all the key levels, and two new staircases in the new extensions. A lightwell will bring daylight into the centre of the building.

It is envisaged that the following activities and events will be held in the building.

- Museum and archive displays and activities
- Music concerts, theatre and dance
- Film screenings and slide shows
- Lectures and educational events
- Community events, craft markets, meetings and functions
- Participation classes
- Foyer café/bar supported by a catering kitchen
- Volunteer resource area

The proposals for the Town Hall will revitalise this well-loved civic building and provide an inclusive cultural centre for the Isles of Scilly. It will fully meet all access standards, including accessible entrances, lift and stairs, refreshment areas, WCs and the improved performance space in the hall. The proposals will provide an opportunity to display the museum exhibits, so that they can be interpreted by all. Once the project is complete, the Town Hall will be a valuable asset for the local community and for visitors from further afield.

B/ Access Review of Proposals

Approach and Arrival

1. The current drawings do not include any alterations to the building approach, except for improvements to the level entrance from Church Street and a service entrance with an external ramp from Silver Street. The car park on the south side of the building, which currently has 10 parking spaces, will remain as existing.
 - *Future design development: A review of the approaches to the building should be carried out; for instance, for people arriving from the town centre along Church Street, as well as from the car park. There should be an inclusive approach to the entrance on the north side of the building. An example where possible alterations could be carried out, is to alter the cobbled area at the road junction to the east of the proposed entrance. This would ensure that people with mobility and/or sensory impairments can pass safely from the car park to the Church Street entrance. Marking out a designated accessible parking bay in the car park should also be considered.*

Museum entrance from Church Street

2. The museum entrance from Church Street will be into a new extension on the west side of the original Town Hall building. The entrance door, adjacent to a glazed shop window, will be automated. The existing central entrance door into the exhibition space (which currently has one step) will not be used as a public entrance.
 - *Future design development: Approach and entrance signage, when it is developed at a later stage, should be clearly visible for people, particularly those with visual impairments. The entrances should also have the recommended manifestation to all glazed doors and panels.*
3. Inside the new entrance door will be the museum reception and shop. Because of their significance, the existing stone steps will be retained.
 - *Future design development: The details of the counter and shop display units will be designed during the next design stage.*

4. Visitors will pass from the entrance/shop through an opening and up a ramp into the introductory exhibition space.
- *Future design development: The gradient, length and handrails on the proposed ramp need to be specified.*

Service entrance from Silver Street

5. The entrance on this side of the building will be into the new east extension, and will be a service entrance. It will have a gentle sloping path into the building, entering through a glazed lobby with two sets of wide doors.

Circulating around the ground floor

6. Due to the fact that there is a change of level of about 1m between the main entrance on Church Street and the rear entrance on Silver Street, an internal change of level via a short ramp and a flight of six steps will be required. The ramp and steps are shown in the introductory exhibition space, rising up to the level of the hall and the remaining ground floor level rooms. The accessible route bypassing the steps will be via the new passenger lift located in the exhibition space.

Circulating around the upper floors

7. **Up to and around first floor:** The first floor will be served by two new staircases on each side of the building, a main staircase in the west extension and another open staircase in the east extension, which wraps around the gig hanging from the ceiling. First floor levels between these two staircases will be level, however the connecting route will pass through the hall balcony. The accessible route bypassing both these staircases will be via the new passenger lift.
8. **Up to and around second floor:** Only the new main staircase in the west extension will rise to the second floor, where it will serve the archive spaces and office/ meeting rooms in the west extension. A further flight of five steps is shown up to the volunteering area at the front of the building. The accessible route bypassing the main staircase and these five steps will be via the passenger lift.

9. **New stairs and steps:** All new stairs and steps will be designed to the current standards set in AD K, with regards to flight widths, numbers of steps in a flight, extending handrails on both sides of flights and step nosings with visual contrast.
10. **Passenger lift:** The passenger lift located in the exhibition space will be designed to AD M2, with at least a minimum car size of 1400 x 1100mm. At ground floor level it will have doors on each side to accommodate the short rise between the entrance level from Church Street up to the hall level, six steps higher. There will be 1500 x 1500mm square waiting spaces at each lift landing. Controls, call buttons and signage, on landings and within the lift car will meet the requirements in AD M2 3.29 – 3.34. The passenger lift will not be an evacuation lift.
11. **Platform lift:** There will be a short-rise platform lift up to the stage with at least a minimum car size of 1250 x 800mm for an unaccompanied wheelchair user. 1500 x 1500mm square waiting spaces are required at both lift landings. Controls, call buttons and signage, on landings and within the lift car will meet the requirements in AD M2 3.34 -3.49.
- *Future design development: The size of the platform lift and space around it needs to be reviewed, to ensure that it is usable by a wheelchair user.*

Horizontal Circulation

12. Throughout the proposals there will be wide circulation corridors (1200mm or wider) and new doors that will meet current access standards in terms of door widths, 300mm offset at the leading edge of the door, ironmongery, vision panels etc.
- *Future design development: Where door closers are necessary, they should meet AD M standards with regards to the force required to open them. It should be noted that for ease of circulation, the use of doors and doors with closers should be minimised, and no closers should be installed on wheelchair accessible WC cubicles. Where there are wide doors which are likely to be heavy to open, they should be automated or held open on electromagnetic fasteners.*

Museum visitor route

13. From the introductory exhibition space, the visitor route will be up the short ramp and six steps, followed by the main staircase to the first floor rooms on the north side of the building. The accessible route will be via the passenger lift. The route for all museum visitors will be through the hall at balcony level to the first floor gig display in the eastern extension.
14. The return route to ground floor level for museum visitors will descend the eastern staircase and pass through the foyer/café bar and through the hall to the shop and exit into Church Street. The return wheelchair accessible route from the first floor gig display will be back through the hall at balcony level and down in the passenger lift.
- *Future design development: Seats on the balcony will need to be removed to allow all visitors, especially wheelchair users, to reach the doors opening into the first floor gig display.*

Hall

15. The hall will be entered through the Church Street entrance, the same entrance as used by museum visitors. From this entrance the route will go up the six steps or via the platform lift to hall level. Within the hall wide gangways are shown at both sides of the seating blocks. At ground floor level, flat seating rows are shown towards the front of the hall and seven rows of retractable seats at the rear of the hall, reached up a central stepped gangway. There are also seating rows on the first floor balcony.
- *Future design development: Wheelchair positions will be required in the hall, with some at ground floor level and some on the balcony, so that wheelchair users have a choice of location. Any positions should have access to a means of escape route. AD M2 states that for an auditorium with 132 seats there should be 2 permanent and 4 removable wheelchair positions.*
 - *Future design development: If acoustic lobbies are required between the circulation areas and the hall, these will need to accommodate wheelchair access with adequate space clear of the door swings.*

16. The change of level up to the stage from the hall or from the changing rooms will be via steps on each side of the stage, or via the new platform lift at the west side of the stage.

Offices

17. The proposals show offices and meeting rooms at first floor level in the west extension, and a volunteering area reached up five steps from the second floor. Both of these areas will be served by WC cubicles.
- *Future design development: If a communal kitchenette/tea-making facilities is included in the proposals for staff and volunteers, note that AD M2 (Paras 4.13 – 4.16) states that shared refreshment facilities should be inclusively designed, with a lower height worktop with clear knee-space under. This is so that wheelchair users have equal access to the facilities.*

Refreshment areas

18. A key aspect of the scheme is the inclusion of café/bar areas on the ground and first floors of the east extension.
19. Servery and bar counters will be designed to include a lowered section with under-counter space suitable for wheelchair users.
- *Future design development: If drinks shelves are required, they should be designed with differing heights to be suitable for seated, as well as standing patrons. Any seating should suit people of differing body types and abilities, including firm seating with back and arm-rests, suitable for people with joint/mobility impairments.*

WCs and sanitary provision

20. General WCs: Two blocks of general unisex WCs will be located at ground floor level in the new west extension. Reached from the café will be one general unisex WC.
21. Unisex wheelchair accessible WCs: One unisex wheelchair accessible WC will be at ground floor level in the west extension and there will be an accessible unisex/ baby-changing cubicle reached from the café. There will be two further

unisex wheelchair accessible WCs in the staff/ meeting room area at first floor level and in the volunteering area at second floor level. All the new wheelchair accessible WC cubicles will meet AD M2 recommended minimum sizes (1500mm x 2200mm, excluding any ducts within the cubicle).

22. For performers there will be a changing room with an accessible WC shower which will have direct access to the steps and platform lift to the stage.
- *Future design development: In the general WCs there should be a cubicle in each block of WCs, designed to meet the needs of ambulant disabled users as per AD M2 Diagram 21. The outward opening doors will assist people who require more space in front of the WC pan and the grabrails will assist people with limited body strength.*
 - *Future design development: If baby-changing facilities are included in a unisex wheelchair accessible WC, then the cubicle will need to be larger to accommodate the extra space for the equipment and bins. It is understood that a 'Changing Places' facility for changing older children/adults is being developed elsewhere in Hugh Town, so one will not be included in the Town Hall proposals.*

Means of escape for people with disabilities

23. Under the Equality Act and BS9999, Council of the Isles of Scilly, as a service provider and employer, has a duty to ensure that disabled people can leave the premises safely in the event of a fire, so any emergency plan will take account of disabled people. Key to this process is the development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs), which will be available for the public, and drafted specifically for members of staff and volunteers with disabilities.
24. **Means of escape strategy:** Because there is no wheelchair access to the upper floors in the building at present, the current escape strategy does not require any evacuation procedures specifically for people who are unable to descend stairs. In the proposals we anticipate that wheelchair users and people who are unable to negotiate stairs will be able to reach all levels of the building via the passenger lift. The fire consultant will need to develop an egress strategy from these levels, making use of assisted evacuation from wheelchair refuges located within fire protected lobbies on the upper floors. It would include clear unobstructed routes and level thresholds to all external exits. Each wheelchair

refuge will consist of a dedicated 900 x 1400mm space with signage and an information panel, located in the fire protected area.

- *Future design development: Protected routes and the locations of safe wheelchair refuges should be reviewed following consultation with a fire expert.*
25. **Visual alarms, e.g. flashing beacons:** Visual alarms, e.g. flashing beacons, will be provided for people who are not able to hear the audible fire alarm signal, for instance where people are alone within the general and accessible WCs or changing facilities.

Other access issues

26. **Wayfinding and Signage:** A signage strategy within the building will be developed to assist people with cognitive, wayfinding and orientation issues.
27. **Visual environment and lighting:** The proposals will include a new lighting scheme. It will provide even lighting levels in circulation areas and feature lighting where communication is essential, such as at service counters and the bar/café serveries. There will be good lighting levels in the exhibition areas, the foyer areas (e.g. for people to read menus and programmes) and in WC facilities (e.g. above basins and mirrors).
- *Future design development: We recommend that the new décor follow good practice with regards to transparent and reflective surfaces, and also colour contrast between doors and walls, floor and walls, plus contrast between sanitary fittings, ironmongery and switches and their backgrounds. However, even though contrast is necessary for people with visual impairments, it is important for people with dementia and cognitive disabilities to avoid uneven light levels and adjacent floor areas with very different colours, texture or bold patterned surfaces, which can be disorientating.*
28. **Audio Enhancement:** At this stage, audio enhancement systems are still being specified. The detailed design of such systems and the audio environment can, however, significantly affect people's ability to communicate with others and hear information.

- *Future design development: Appropriate floor, wall and ceiling finishes should be chosen to minimise echoes, as people with partial hearing loss can find reflected sound very disturbing. Hearing enhancement systems should be appropriately chosen, particularly where they are used in separate, but adjacent spaces, (to minimise overspill) or where background noise may be an issue. We also recommend that reception points, e.g. box office and café/bar counters have an induction loop to assist people with hearing aids.*

B/ Access to and within the current building

This section reviews disabled access at the existing Town Hall, collecting data through a virtual site visit via video-link on 25 November 2021 with the Town Hall staff. It considers access into and around the building and identifies the key access barriers which will need to be resolved. The recommendations in this report section have been fed into the initial stages of the design process, led by Purcell Architects and the design team.

Approaches and parking

1. The nearest car park is in the parking area to the rear of the building, where there is space for around ten vehicles. It should be noted that only Scilly Isles residents have cars and some use golf buggies. Parking provision is not very strictly enforced. Visitors to the building also park in surrounding streets, where there is space. In the car park there are no designated accessible parking bays marked out.
2. Currently the most accessible entrance is to the front of the hall, where disabled people can be dropped off in Church Street. There is small, uneven kerb (around 60mm high) to the pavement from the roadway.
3. At both entrances there are ad-hoc drop-off spaces for visitors being dropped off by taxi.
4. For people approaching by bicycle, there are cycle stands opposite the front entrance on Church Street.



Parking at rear of Town Hall



Front of Town Hall: view from Church Street



View westwards along Church Street, showing cycle parking to left

Approach by foot or wheelchair

5. Because the building is in the town centre, it is likely that many visitors (particularly tourists) will arrive by foot. Some people will arrive by wheelchair or mobility scooter. The pavements immediately in front of the building appear level, with a suitable width for safe wheelchair passage. However, the route from the car park to the front of the building appears to have a cobbled section, which may present problems for people with mobility or balance impairments. Cobblestones are also a difficult surface for wheelchair users to cross.



Cobbles on route from carpark

Main entrance and reception

6. The original main entrance to the Town Hall is from Church Street. It consists of double doors, which open inwards directly from the pavement. The opening width through one door leaf is approximately 800mm, which gives just sufficient clearance for a wheelchair user; however, there is a 150mm high step inside the doors, so it is not an accessible entrance.
7. A short distance along Church Street is another door, which now serves as the main public entrance. This is a 900mm wide push-pad automated, outward-opening glazed single door. More accessible than the original entrance, it opens into the visitor reception area.



Main entrance off Church Street



New public entrance off Church Street

8. The reception area is a small well-lit space, with a reception counter on the window-side. The counter has a lowered section (720mm high) for wheelchair users. There is no hearing enhancement system (audio-induction loop) for visitors with hearing impairments.
9. The reception area provides access via a ramp to a small museum space and offices at the front of the building, which are discussed later.
10. An original flight of six stone steps rises up from the reception area to the level of the hall. The WCs and staircases to the upper floors are also reached by passing through a lobby at the top of these steps.



Reception counter



Six steps leading from main reception

Rear entrance to Town Hall

11. The rear entrance is only accessible for people with mobility impairments with assistance. It consists of a small porch, which has outward-opening single timber doors on both sides (clear opening width approx. 900mm). Small steep ramps (gradient approximately 1:10) slope down to each door with a handrail to one side. The door thresholds have a slight lip. In wet weather, sandbags are stacked up at the doorways to prevent water ingress.
12. The porch itself is small, measuring approx. 1550mm x 2300mm. A set of outward opening double doors provide access into the hall (clear opening width of approx. 800mm to one leaf).



Rear of Town Hall



Rear entrance with sandbags across threshold.

Key access issues with approaches, entrances, reception

- There is only one accessible entrance from Church Street (the single door in the extension). The reception area is quite restricted in size, and it could lead to increased congestion if someone in a larger wheelchair is moving to exit the building against the general inward flow of traffic.
- The pedestrian route from the car park to the accessible public entrance crosses a cobbled section of roadway, which could be inaccessible to people with walking difficulties or who use wheelchairs.
- The rear entrance has uneven thresholds at the porch doors and has restricted manoeuvring space within the porch.
- The only internal connection between the front entrance from Church Street and the hall is via the six stone steps.

Hall

13. The hall is accessed from the main reception up a flight of six stone steps, which leads to an internal corridor and narrow double doors into the hall (650mm clearance to one leaf). The hall itself is a large open space. The proscenium stage at one end is currently boarded off for use as a store. A small flight of steps leads up to the stage.

Halfway along the western wall of the hall are narrow double doors (500mm clear opening width to one leaf) leading to the WCs within the extension at ground floor level.



Interior of hall – looking towards stage from rear doors



Interior of hall – looking from stage end

Key access issues with the hall

- Due to the steps from the reception and the uneven threshold at the rear entrance, there is no easy access for wheelchair users or anyone with a more severe mobility impairment to reach the hall.

- There is only stepped access to the stage, which limits access for disabled performers.
- Double doors into the hall and from the hall to the WCs are too narrow for wheelchair passage (750mm clear width through one opening leaf is the minimum width recommended in AD M2).

Museum

12. On the ground floor at the front of the building is a small museum. It can be entered via the original front entrance; but in practice, visitors are encouraged to enter via the reception door and exit via the original double doors to create a one-way route. Between the reception and the museum is an internal ramp.

In this area, partition walls have been inserted to form offices and stores. It is anticipated that these walls will be removed in the project proposals.

The museum space contains a range of tall glass cabinets and cases on plinths. Structural columns interrupt the circulation space in the centre of the room.



Museum interior, looking towards the reception and front of the building



Interior of Museum, viewed as one enters from the reception area.

Offices

13. There are other offices for council staff on each level of the building. These are situated at the northern end of the building (the front, overlooking Church Street) and in the extension on the west side.



Upper floor office space/ meeting room

Key access issues with the museum and office spaces

- The small museum is usually entered via the ramp from the front reception area. However, visitors are generally required to exit via the main double doors at the front of the building, which have a 150mm high step at the threshold, so disabled people have to return via the reception door. Note that the exhibition cases, objects, signage and interpretation was not audited for this report.
- The only office spaces with ramped access are the two small office areas adjacent to the museum space, but there is no wheelchair accessible WC near them. The other offices are either reached by steps or through narrow doors and corridors. It would be possible for people with ambulant disabilities to reach the ground floor offices in the western extension via the rear entrance, but the numerous internal doors and small lobbies precludes access for wheelchair users.
- There is no lift access to the upper floor office spaces.



Step at front entrance/exit doors from museum to external footpath.



Small lobby at base of stair leading to office

General and accessible WCs (including change-facilities)

14. There are toilets on the ground and first floors of the building within the extension on the western side.
15. Alongside the general WCs there is also a right-hand transfer unisex wheelchair accessible WC on the ground floor.



Accessible WC on ground floor

Key access issues with the WCs

- The ground floor WCs (including the only accessible WC) can only be accessed via the very narrow double doors from the hall, or via a series of internal doors leading through one of the offices. The route in either case is not suitable for wheelchair users or people with larger walking aids, who would struggle to open the doors independently.
- There is no baby or adult changing facility.

Staff kitchenette/tea-making facilities

16. There is a staff kitchenette within the extension on the ground floor, plus a small kitchenette/tea-making area in the first floor corridor. The main kitchenette facility consists of a kitchen sink, L-shaped worktop and storage cupboards.



Ground floor kitchenette

Key access issues with the staff kitchenette/tea-making facilities

- The tea-making facilities for council staff are within the extension, and the access from the main reception is via steps.
- There is no lift access to the first floor for anyone unable to manage the internal stairs.

Circulation ramp and steps

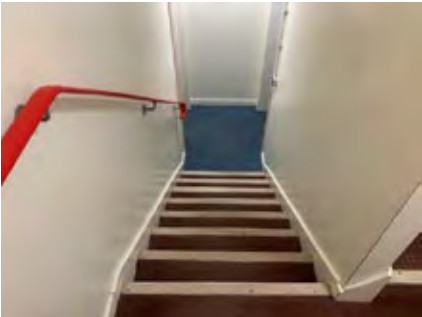
There are currently numerous sets of stairs connecting different parts of the building, plus a small internal ramp from the reception to the museum. These are described below:

17. **Staircase from reception to museum and rear corridor:** This is a flight of six stone steps with one ornate handrail, and has no contrasting nosings.



Stone staircase from main reception to other parts of the building

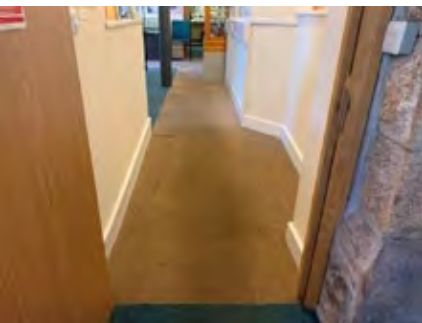
18. **Circulation staircase at front of building:** This narrow staircase leads from a small lobby at the top of the stone steps to the first floor spaces above the museum (old council chamber and office extension). The staircase is fairly steep, with a handrail on one side only.



Narrow circulation staircase adjacent to hall, leading to upper floor offices.

19. **Circulation staircase adjacent to the hall:** This is a narrow, carpeted staircase rising in four flights from the ground to second floor. It only has one handrail which has good visual contrast, as do the stair nosings. There is a small enclosed landing at each level.

20. **Ramp from main reception area to ground floor museum:** This has a steeply sloping gradient (greater than 1:10), is narrow (approximately 950mm, compared to the recommended ramp width of 1500mm) and has no handrails.



Short ramp from reception to museum

Key Access Issues with Ramps & Steps

- The stone steps from reception are steep and have only one handrail, so people who require support on either side (eg. with hemiplegia) may struggle to ascend or descend safely. They also do not have visually contrasting nosings.

- There is no alternative lift access to the hall or upper parts of the building from the front entrance from Church Street, so wheelchair users must enter the hall via the rear doors from the car park.
- There is no lift access to the first floor offices, so these spaces are inaccessible to any wheelchair users or anyone who cannot manage steps.
- The internal ramp is steeper and narrower than permitted by current access standards. It has no handrails to assist people who require support.
- The circulation stair adjacent to the hall is very narrow, with only one handrail, and restricted space in the landing lobbies. This presents access issues, not only for wheelchair users (who cannot reach the upper floor offices), but also for anyone who needs handrails either side.

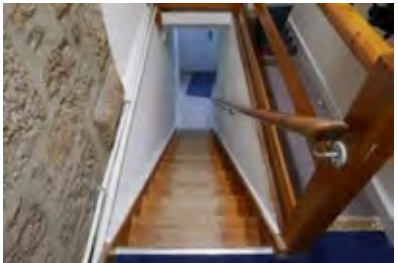
Emergency egress routes

21. Emergency egress routes from the ground floor are via the external doors at the front and rear. For wheelchair users, this would be via the door from the main reception, which has a level threshold.

From the upper floors, the escape routes are from the second floor, via the main staircase descending to the hall, or alternatively from the first floor via the main staircase or smaller rear staircase to an external exit at the back of the building.

Key Access Issues with egress routes

- The main issue with egress is the lack of level access for wheelchair users, or anyone with mobility or sensory issues who cannot manage steps.
- There is also insufficient space at stair landings for wheelchair refuges, which must be located within a fire protected enclosure, for someone who needs to wait for assistance to evacuate the building.



Emergency escape stairs leading to rear of building

Appendix: Legislation and guidance

The Equality Act 2010 (formally the Disability Discrimination Act 1995/ 2005) sets out rights and duties for service providers, employers and educational institutions.

The Equality Acts defines a disabled person as ‘someone who has a physical and mental impairment, which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’ The effect must be substantial, adverse and long-term.

Physical and mental impairment includes sensory impairments. It includes hidden impairments including, for example, mental illness.

a) Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably because they are disabled. The service provider must not indirectly discriminate against a disabled person unless there is a clear reason to do so. They must also not treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability, unless there is a clear and fair reason. For this form of discrimination, the service provider must know or should reasonably have been expected to know that the person is disabled.

A service provider must not harass a disabled person in relation to access to everyday services and there is protection from direct disability discrimination and harassment for people who are associated with a disabled person or who are wrongly believed to be disabled.

Service providers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the way they deliver their services. This is so that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people in accessing the services.

Examples of reasonable adjustments could include:

- installing an induction loop for people who are hearing impaired
- providing disability awareness training for staff who have contact with the public
- providing larger, well-defined signage for people with impaired vision
- putting in a ramp at the entrance to a building which has steps

What is considered a reasonable adjustment for a large organisation like a bank, may be different from what is a reasonable adjustment for a small local shop. It is about what is practical in the service provider’s individual situation and what resources the business may

have. They will not be required to make adjustments that are not reasonable because they are unaffordable or impractical.

Service Provider Provisions

The duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 Service Provider Provisions is an anticipatory duty owed to disabled people at large. It is not simply a duty to individuals. The duty to make reasonable adjustments, in relation to providing auxiliary aids and overcoming physical barriers to access, applies to the areas of the property where the service is provided, and the access to these areas.

Employer Provisions

Under the Equality Act 2010 there is a duty placed on employers to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to take employment. Employers must take reasonable steps to alter arrangements made, or alter any physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. The duty to make adjustments is not anticipatory but is specific to the needs of individuals. There is no requirement to make wholesale changes in anticipation.

The organisation cannot fully anticipate a disabled employee’s needs, since individual disabilities vary. Our review considers the general circulation and facilities requirements for staff who may use mobility aids and other walking aids or who may have a visual or hearing impairment.

Once employment is offered to a disabled person, or an existing employee develops a disability, where this affects mobility, vision, hearing or other normal functions, his or her needs must be fully assessed. We recommend that the organisation holds confidential discussions with the individual and engage a professional access advisor to assess the need for suitable and reasonable adjustments to all work areas affected, including a personal emergency escape plan.

Equality Duty Provisions

The Disability Equality Duty requires all public bodies (e.g. councils, large institutions) to actively look at ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. All of those bodies covered by the specific duties must also have produced a Disability Equality Scheme, which they must implement.

b) Access standards

Building Regulations Part M2 and K

The design and construction of a new building, or the material alteration of an existing one, must comply with Building Regulations. For buildings in England and Wales, Building Regulations Part M2, *Access to and Use of Buildings* and Building Regulations Part K, *Protection from Falling, collision and impact*, are intended to ensure that reasonable provision is made for people to gain access to and use buildings.

Guidance accompanying the Building Regulations (known as ‘Approved Document M2 or K’ or AD M2 or AD K) set out a number of ‘provisions’ as suggested ways in which the requirements of the Regulations might be met. It is unlikely to be reasonable for a service provider or employer to have to make an adjustment to a physical feature of a building which it occupies, if that feature accords with the relevant provisions of the most up to date version of AD M2 and K.

BS 8300:2018

As the Building Regulations provide only a baseline standard of accessibility for new buildings and buildings undergoing redevelopment, a second document is essential reference when assessing the access requirements of disabled people to existing buildings and landscapes; the British Standard 8300:2018, *Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice*.

Other Guidance

There are other ‘best practice’ guides, such as the Centre for Accessible Environments ‘Designing for Accessibility’, which gives advice concerning design issues not covered in AD M2, AD K or BS8300:2018, and the Sign Design Guide, providing useful information on signage.

c) BS9999 Section 46.7 Use of personal emergency evacuation plans

Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are recommended for all people requiring assistance to leave the building. Through the recording of PEEPs, the management team should be made aware of the amount of staff support required for each evacuation. There are three types of PEEP that might need to be developed.

i) Individual PEEP for disabled people who are regularly in the premises, for example staff and regular visitors

Following discussions with an individual, a plan can be developed for their specific needs which should contain details of how they will evacuate the premises. By taking into account the individual needs of a person when preparing a PEEP, management will be able to make any reasonable adjustments to the premises or procedures that are necessary. They will also be able to make provision for actions to be taken in the event of a false alarm, or if the person cannot return to the building after a fire.

ii) PEEPs for visitors to the premises who will make themselves known to staff, such as event patrons

Visitors who are likely to require assistance in the event of an evacuation should be encouraged to make themselves known to staff on arrival. Management should be encouraged to have available, especially at reception, staff who are trained in disability awareness. This will make this process more comfortable for disabled people and more effective for management. The generic PEEPs should provide a wide range of guidance for differing disabilities and be adapted for the individual premises. They need to include what the visitor should do in an evacuation, and what the management response will be. They should also reflect what specific fire safety provisions are provided for disabled persons on the premises, e.g. fire alarms adapted for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. It is important that the generic PEEP is discussed with each visitor and their particular needs taken into account where possible.

iii) PEEPs for visitors not previously identified to staff, such as café users

The standard evacuation plan should include measures to make evacuations suitable for all persons on the premises. Information for disabled people should be noted in fire action notices and in the fire management plan. It is vitally important that staff are trained so that they are aware of the facilities and their responsibility to evacuate disabled people and know how to use features such as evacuation lifts or refuges. Enough staff should be available at all times to make sure that evacuation plans are viable. This is particularly important where features such as carry-down procedures are to be adopted to evacuate mobility-impaired people.



SCREENING for Flood Risk Assessment

Council of the Isles of Scilly

Date of Assessment: 24/11/2021 Assessor: L Walton

Checked by: S Swabey

Location: Town Hall, the Parade Settlement: Hugh Town

Island: St Mary's

Planning Permission reference: Pre-app

Other reference (specify origin): UPRN: 000192000794

1. Flood Risk Study

Using the 2019 Flood Risk Study for the Isles of Scilly by JBA.

- a) Is the location within any of the flood extents for the February 2014 or the October 2012 storm events (Figure 4-21 to Figure 4-43)? **No**
- b) Is the location within the model flood extents for the defended present-day situation (use maps in Section 5)?
No If 'Yes' or 'Not clear', what colour is that area? Choose an item.
- c) Is the location within the model flood extents for the Defended 2067 UKCP09 situation (use maps in Section 5)?
Not clear If 'Yes' or 'Not clear', what colour is that area? **T1000 2067 UKCP09 Def - 1:1000 year event**
- d) Is the location within the model flood extents for the Defended 2117 UKCP09 situation (use maps in Section 5)?
Yes If 'Yes' or 'Not clear', what colour is that area? **T200 2117 UKCP09 Def - 1:200 year event**

If the location is within any of the flood extents noted in 1) a) to d), then complete the 'Conclusion' at question 4 and stop here. Otherwise continue with Question 2.

2) Coastal cross sections

3) Field Visit

4) Conclusions

Question 1 has **been considered. The conclusion(s) is/are that:**

The location has a **low** risk of flooding in the 1:200-year event (0.5% per annum) at the **present day**.

The location has a **low** risk of flooding in the 1:200-year event (0.5% per annum) **at 2067**, with 0.35 m of sea level rise.

The location has a **high** risk of flooding in the 1:200-year event (0.5% per annum) **at 2117**, with 0.81 m of sea level rise.

Food Risk Assessment Required? (Y/N) **Yes**

Notes on Proposed Development

Proposed development has to be demonstrated as safe over its lifetime from flooding. A flood risk assessment would be expected to address this, as per Policy SS7 of the Local Plan, if the site is considered to be at risk of flooding:

POLICY SS7 Flood Avoidance and Coastal Erosion

(1) Development proposals to build below the 5 metre contour (5 metres above Ordnance Datum, Newlyn) or in other areas shown to be at risk of flooding or coastal erosion, as set out in the policies map, will not be permitted unless an appropriate and proportionate Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) demonstrates how the flood risk will be managed, and that:

a) the development, taking climate change into account, does not create a flood risk over its lifetime to existing or proposed properties and/or surrounding land;

b) appropriate acceptable mitigation and recovery measures can be undertaken to ensure no significant adverse impact on human health or the natural and built environment as well as cultural heritage; and

c) if there is any doubt, the precautionary principle will apply.

(2) All major developments, regardless of location, should also be accompanied by a proportionate Flood Risk Assessment and appropriate sustainable drainage system. (3) Natural dune restoration and works connected with flood resilience and coastal defence will be supported where any natural and historic environment designations, that may be affected, have been adequately addressed in accordance with Policy OE2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and OE7 (Historic Environment).

For any extension to the Town Hall, it will be important for the ground or floor level not to be lowered as part of the proposed changes. Any lowering would bring the site closer to being at risk of flooding.

END

