

# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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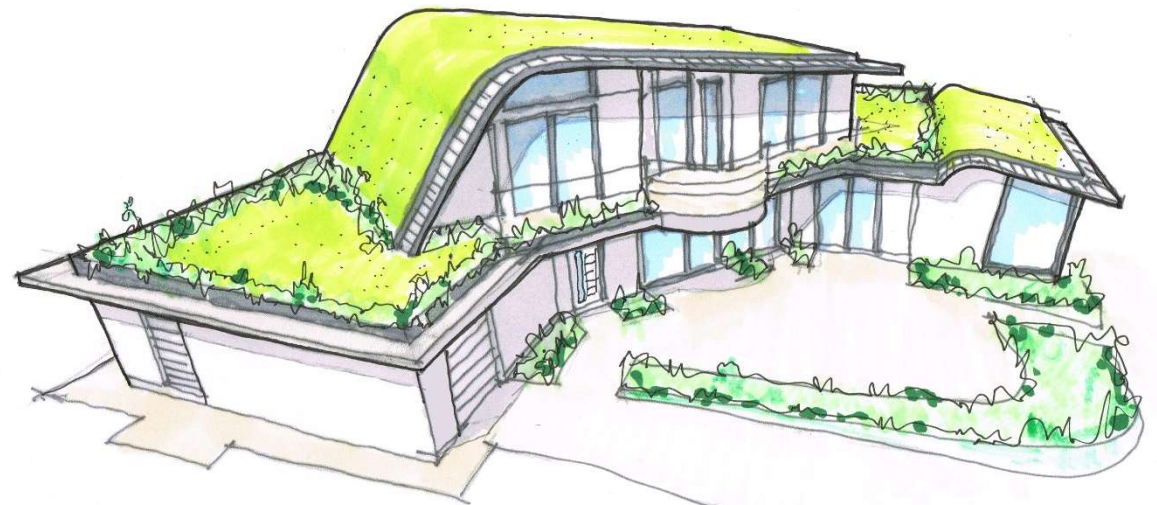
*By A King at 11:48 am, May 26, 2023*

## PROPOSED REPLACEMENT DWELLING

### COOTAMUNDRA

McFarland's Down

St Mary's, IOS



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1. Introduction, client brief and outline
2. Location, Site Setting and Context
3. Design development
4. Final development proposals
5. Public Consultation
6. Access, Highways and Refuse
7. Drainage
8. Materials
9. Sustainability
10. Lifetime Homes standards
11. Summary



## 1. Introduction, client brief and outline

This Design and Access statement has been produced in support of a full planning application for the demolition of the existing derelict house and the construction of a fully accessible, Lifetime Homes Standard, sustainable replacement dwelling at Cootamundra, McFarland's Down, St Marys, Isles of Scilly.

Cootamundra is currently owned by Noel and Emily Miles.

Mr Miles was, through no fault of his own, involved in a serious Road Traffic Accident on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019, suffering life changing injuries. As a direct result of the accident, he is now an above knee amputee and is paralysed in his lower body, necessitating the full-time use of a wheelchair or mobility aid. In addition, Mr Miles now has to engage in an intense daily rehabilitation regime to ensure the best outcome from the massive injuries that he has sustained.

Noel and Emily have enjoyed a long relationship with the islands and have parents' resident on St Mary's. They have both spent considerable time on St Mary's over many years, and have participated in many events on the islands, including the Tresco marathon and triathlon. Following the accident Noel, Emily and their young son Murray decided to establish a home and rehabilitation base on Scilly where they can focus on the tough road ahead, in a place they love and are comfortable, and where they can access support from the family.

To this end, they had been looking for a property that could be adapted to be fully accessible, and purchased Cootamundra early in 2023.

This Statement illustrates the considered assessment and evaluation of the site and its context, and outlines the processes leading to the sensitive design for a high-quality sustainable home that respects its location, and meets the additional exceptional requirements outlined above.

## 2. Location, Site Setting and Context

Cootamundra is situated at the Northern end of McFarland's Down, a residential road within the 'Telegraph' settlement, to the North of St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, and is approximately 1.7 Miles from the centre of Hugh Town.

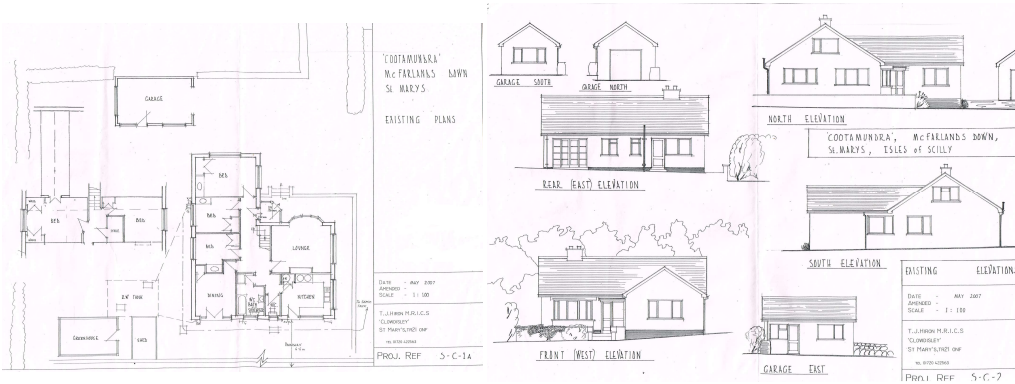


The site is roughly rectangular, with a grass driveway emerging from the Western boundary and joining on to the end of McFarland's Down.

It is 0.112 Ha (0.28 Acres) in area, and slopes gently from South to North ( approx. 1.78m) and East to West (approx. 0.52m). The grass driveway is nearly flat, falling approximately 0.38m from the dwelling to McFarland's Down.

The existing dwelling is a 5-bedroom Bungalow, with two of the bedrooms being attic rooms. The house, which has not been occupied for a number of years, is in extremely poor and dangerous condition.

There is also a large single garage, also in poor repair.



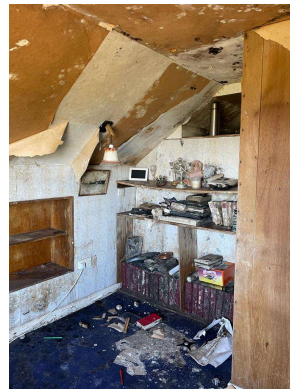
Plans and elevations as existing



View from McFarland's Down



Interior views of ground and first floors



The site was completely overgrown, but a large proportion of the overgrowth was cut back to enable the topographical survey to be carried out.

It was decided not to survey the house itself. With floors that had rotted and were collapsing it was too dangerous to commission a survey of the interior, and it was clear that any development would involve its demolition.

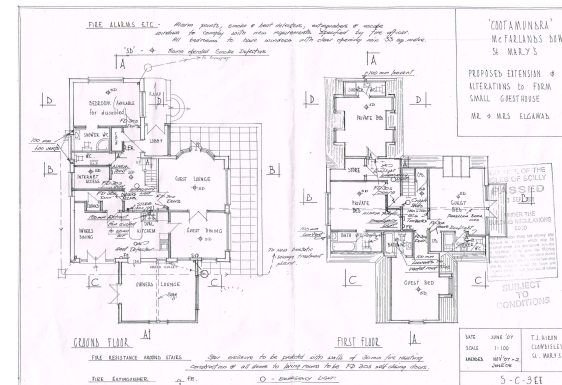
The access drive is bounded by 1.5 – 1.8 m high hedges.

To the East of the site is Long Rock, which is wooded with many mature trees

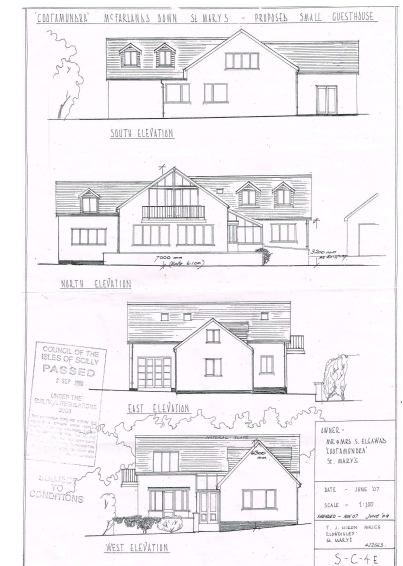
Cootamundra sits behind (to the East) of its nearest neighbour, Halangy, and backs on to the garden of Trenemene to the South.

There are very few direct public vantage points of the site, and at any of these points it would be necessary for the public to be actively looking for the property. It will not easily be visible from anywhere at a glance. There will be no, or limited, impact on the visual environment in the area.

Cootamundra also has benefit of a valid 2008 planning consent for fairly substantial alterations to form a small guesthouse.

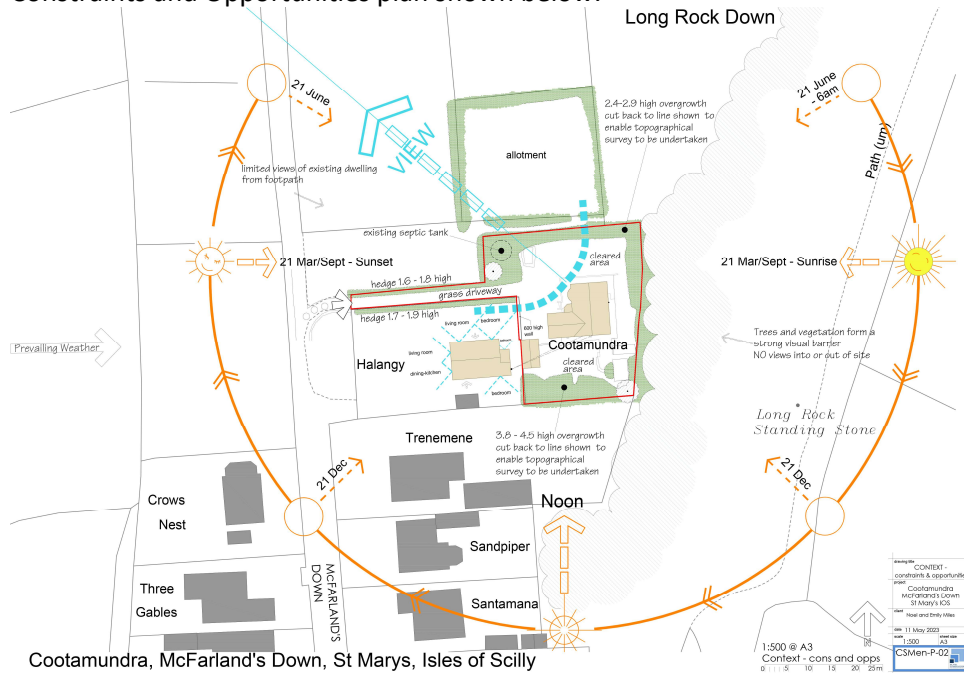


Plans and elevations as approved 2008



Prior to embarking on the design of the proposed dwelling a full appraisal of the character of the site and its context was undertaken, and all issues associated with site layout, scale proportion and massing have been carefully considered.

The primary context and design considerations are highlighted on the Context - Constraints and Opportunities plan shown below.



Context – constraints and opportunities

### 3. Design development

From the outset it was clear that the existing house was in a particularly poor state and could not practically and economically be renovated, and more particularly, could not be brought up to modern sustainable and accessible standards.

The brief from Mr Miles for a new home was of necessity very specific, the main points of which are shown below –

- In terms of must haves and some guiding principles:*
- Eco house as much as possible

- Just to state the obvious: everything is accessible and no areas out of bounds for me.
- Open plan layout and ease of journey throughout the house
- Minimum of 3 bathrooms, including one with a bath as well as a shower
- Outside garage / storage as I have a lot of gubbins.....
- Outside shower area
- sheltered sun spot for a bbq

Other requirements are encompassed in an Occupational Therapists report, the majority of which, apart from turning circles and door widths which form a part of the planning drawings, will be dealt with at the detail stage.

The design therefore must evolve from the overriding statement from the client, which is *'.. everything is accessible and no areas out of bounds..'*

This translates into a level access home suitable for a disabled person to be able to live comfortably and independently, with all of the primary requirements met by single level living on the ground floor. Whilst Part M of the building regulations adequately covers access to, and use of, the building, in order to better future proof the proposed home it was decided to design to the recommendations embodied in the Lifetimes Homes Standard supplemented with details from the Occupational Therapist's report.

Where possible the Lifetime Homes good practice recommendations that exceed or are in addition to the standard requirements will be incorporated.

The design principles and the starting point for the design to meet client needs must be from the 'inside - out' and in terms of layout was therefore quite straightforward – level access to a home that could be used in a practical way on a single floor.

Looking to both current and future requirements, the home needed to be not only suitable for Noel Miles, his family and guests, but with the ability to accommodate visiting trainers and occupational therapists. It also made sense to future-proof the accommodation in anticipation of potential future needs for live-in carers.

Whilst the obvious starting point was a single storey dwelling (bungalow), it soon became apparent that to meet all of the needs of the client on one level the footprint would probably be larger than would be appropriate for the plot.

As a result, the room for a visiting OT / long term carer or guest bedroom, together with the second bedroom and associated wet room/bathrooms were put on the first floor.

Additionally, with Mr Miles's wheelchair requirement, the views from the ground floor are very limiting and it soon became clear that to be able to take benefit of the views, access to the first floor would be essential.

Ties in with '.. nowhere to be out of bounds..' meant that a lift would be installed to reach the upper floor in any event

The first sketch was presented to the clients without any elevations having been considered – as stated earlier the whole design is about the accessibility requirements for Mr Miles.

The footprint shape was derived from key points in the context plan – the primary 'grain' of Mcfarland's Down, and therefore the site, which is North-South and the best view from the site which is to the North West.



Sketch 01

The first sketch was well received in principle, particularly the welcoming 'open arms' shape of the dwelling as it is approached, giving the feeling of being 'hugged' on arrival.

Assessment of the initial proposals with the clients resulted in the following :  
 a garage as such is not necessary, but a store/garage for hand bikes, all terrain special wheelchair and possibly in the future a small electric buggy is essential.

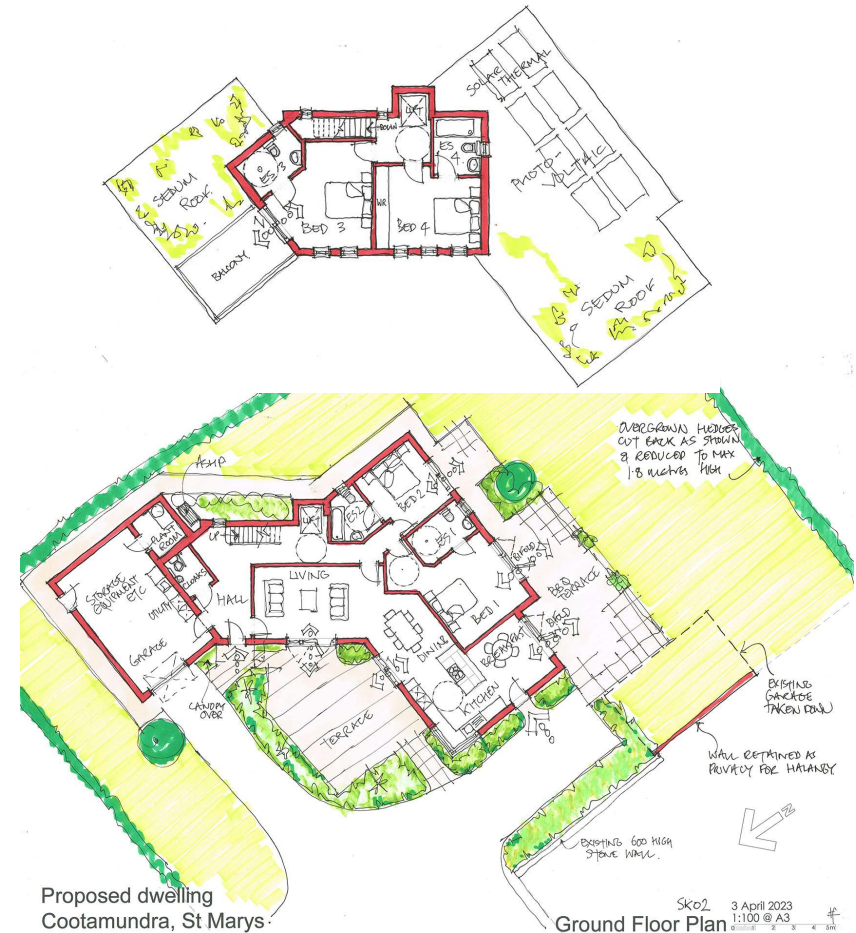
A preference for all of the living areas - kitchen, dining and living to be on the 'front' (north/North West) because this does get the late afternoon early evening sun, and the view.

A balcony to be accessible to all, not just from one of the bedrooms

A therapy room

A sedum roof was suggested

From this meeting, Sketch 02 was produced, which now includes a location for the Air Source Heat Pump and a suitably sized plant room for all of the essential associated equipment.



Proposed dwelling  
 Cootamundra, St Marys

Sketch 02

SK02 3 April 2023  
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Scheme 2 addressed the main items commented on in scheme 1, such as repositioning the Kitchen, dining and living spaces to the front and included other typical on-going design elements as part of the process

With the proposals now accepted in principle, further discussions with the clients elicited some small changes as follows:

Switch lounge and kitchen in order for the living area to benefit from the proposed corner window, and the kitchen to get a fuller more accessible view of the North terrace and the access.

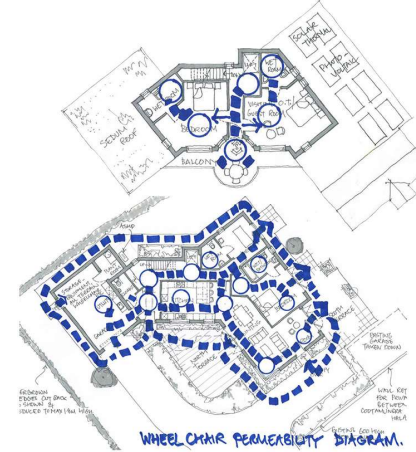
Noted that the balcony was still not accessible to all.

### Sketch 3



Sketch 3 located the kitchen in the centre of the front elevation, giving the living area the corner window. Therapy room now included.

The balcony now located on the front of the house, with central access that can be reached directly from the stairs and the lift and is therefore accessible to all.



A plan was also included to demonstrate to Mr Miles the fully permeable and accessible layout of the house and the immediate external environment.

Scheme 3 was discussed in detail with Mr and Mrs Miles, and in principle satisfied the brief. It was agreed that this sketch would form the basis for the planning submission and that it was now time to turn to the 3D element and how their new home was going to look.

The first sketch was a cautious traditional looking two storey house, largely produced to get a feeling for the massing, but also to gauge reactions from the client, the neighbours and the planning officer.



There was a disappointed reaction from the clients, who had hoped for a modern green roofed sustainable building.

We were pointed towards the Tourist Information Centre on St Mary's



The request was for '*...an amazing house..*' that is not so far off the wall it cannot be approved or built on Scilly, but '*...we would like to dare to be different in some way, please*'.

At this point, with the plans acceptable to the clients, and the elevations under discussion we arranged an informal meeting on site with the Chief Planning Officer, Lisa Walton, on 20<sup>th</sup> April .

The dereliction of the existing property, its purchase by Mr and Mrs Miles, and the special requirements of accessibility etc were discussed.

Draft proposals (Sketch 03), a draft constraints and opportunities plan and the draft elevations were discussed.

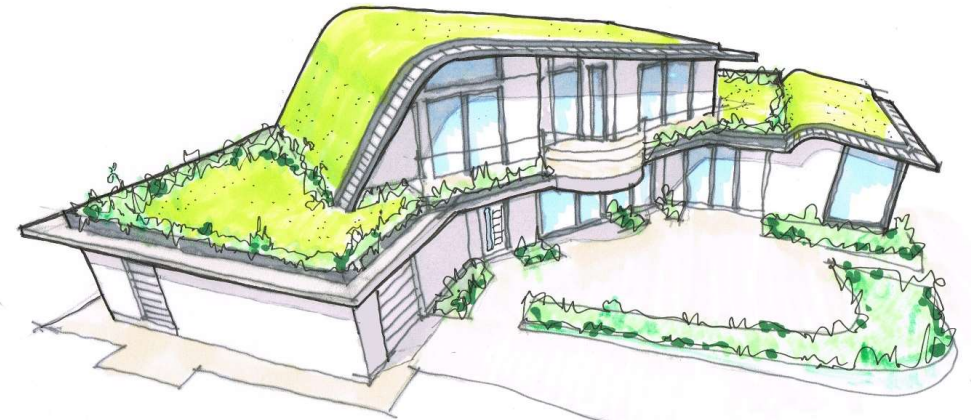
The scheme presented appeared to be acceptable in principle (subject, as usual to the submitted drawings) and the need for a slightly larger footprint and a small two storey element was noted. Some discussion centred around lowering the floor level, but the reasons for not doing so (wheelchair eyeline) were accepted.

The subject of the request from the clients for more interesting elevations than the 'standard' was debated.

We discussed the fact that Cootamundra is at the end of then run and there is less requirement to 'fit in' with any adjacent properties. We would hope that for these reasons a design could be considered that did not wholly reflect the immediate vernacular.

We followed up this meeting with the immediate neighbours at Halangy, showed the proposals, and agreed to make some changes requested.

The issue of interesting elevations was then addressed, and the perspective below was sent to the clients.



This design encompassed the clients desire for something modern and sustainable, with a contemporary roofline that reflects the undulating nature of the interior landscape of St Mary's.

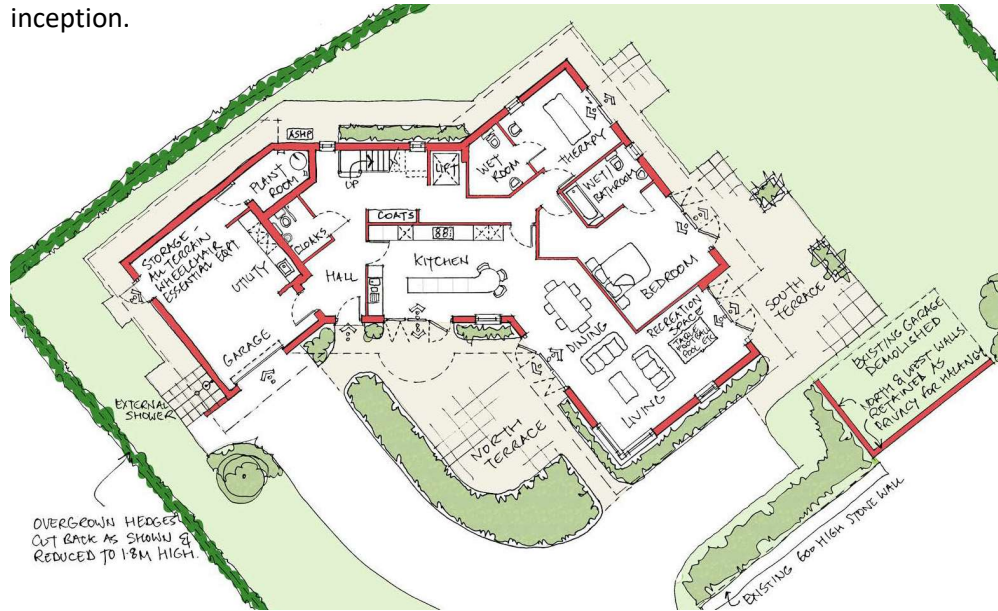
The low profile of the roof means that we have a two-storey building that is approximately the same height as the existing dwelling, minimising any visual impact.

Noel and Emily were extremely pleased with the appearance now being presented, and we were instructed to submit the scheme.

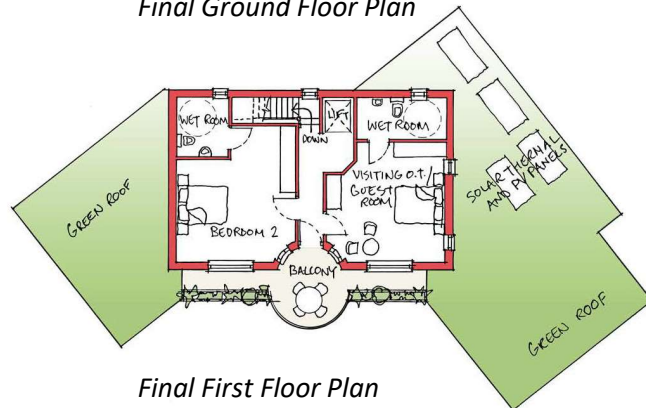


## 4. Final development proposals

With the client requirements and brief for the layout being very specific, and the regular discussions, the overall plan design has not changed significantly since inception.



Final Ground Floor Plan



Final First Floor Plan

### Areas

Existing Floor Area: 157.1 SqM Existing Footprint (inc. garage) 141.03 SqM  
 Proposed Floor Area: 209.08 SqM Proposed Footprint (inc. garage) 200.3 SqM  
 2008 Approval: Floor Area 237.5 SqM Footprint (inc. garage) 171.79 SqM

## 5. Public Consultation

Neighbours have been kept fully aware of the scheme since its inception, and generally have no objection with the proposals.

## 6. Access, Highways and Refuse

The proposed dwelling will be accessed via the existing track from McFarland's Down.

There will be adequate on-site parking and manoeuvring and it will be suitable for wheelchair access from a vehicle.

Whilst car parking is not a requirement for Mr and Mrs Miles, if vehicles do need to access the site, parking and turning has been considered.

Criterion 1 of Lifetime Homes Standards requires a minimum parking width of 3300mm. The good practice recommendations request 3600mm wide parking, which we have achieved. We will look at making it wider than this if necessary.

Approach to the dwelling from car parking meets Criterion 2

Refuse will be dealt with by the existing arrangements for McFarland's Down.

## 7. Drainage

### Foul Drainage

The existing septic tank will be replaced with a modern biodisc.

There appears to be an existing water storage tank to the rear of the existing property. If suitable, this will be re-used for surface water storage. If not suitable a new storage tank will be installed.

## 8. Materials

The materials and their colours respect the locality

Roof: Green roof

Walls: Through coloured render in Antique white, with a 'local stone' feature

Windows: Aluminium double or triple glazed in grey for optimum maintenance free performance

## 9. Sustainability

The object of the detail design will be to exceed minimum building regulation requirements, and look for all current thoughts on building-in climate change resilience. Various forms of heating are being considered, including air source and ground source heat pumps, with solar thermal panels supplementing the hot water. Insulation levels will exceed minimum requirements, with double or triple glazed windows and doors.

## 10. Lifetime Homes standards

The detail design of the dwelling will be based on all of the relevant lifetime Homes Criteria. These are mentioned where appropriate in this document, with the majority being dealt with as building regulation or construction details.

Whilst the fundamental accessibility elements of the original criteria can now largely be found in part M of the building regulations, particularly in the enhanced but not obligatory requirements of M4(2) and M4(3), subscribing fully to the Lifetime Homes criteria will ensure a much more inclusive and sustainable dwelling than currently required by either planning or building regulations.

Lifetime Homes concept is based on five overarching principles

- Inclusivity
- Accessibility
- Adaptability
- Sustainability
- Good value

It then sets out 16 criteria for accessibility and inclusive design

- Car parking width
- Moving from the parking space to the home
- Approach to the home
- Entrances
- Communal stairs and lifts
- Doorways & hallways
- Space to turn and move around
- Living room

- Convenient bed-space
- Accessible WC and potential shower
- Bathroom walls
- Getting upstairs - possibility for stair lift and future through floor lift
- Getting between bedroom and bathroom - potential hoist
- Bathroom layout
- Windows
- Sockets and controls

If not already noted on the drawings, all of these criteria can be incorporated in the scheme at the detail design stage, and it is intended to use the additional good practice recommendations wherever possible.

## 11. Summary

These proposals produce a sensitively designed home that respects its location, uses materials that reflect its setting and the adjacent buildings and is sympathetic to Scilly, with the AONB status informing many of the design decisions.

The proposals fully embrace advanced technology and contemporary lifestyles and meet the additional exceptional requirements required for its primary occupant.

