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# BOTTOM ANNEXE STAFF ACCOMMODATION, TRESKO

## DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT

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Prepared by Llewellyn Harker Lowe Architects



Application Site (Google Maps 2023)

# I. INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared in support of an application for the construction of a new staff accommodation development to replace the 'Bottom Annexe', in the Old Grimsby area of Tresco.

The application seeks to replace the existing 17 units of HMO accommodation with 11 new higher quality units, in order to address the shortage of quality staff accommodation on Tresco.

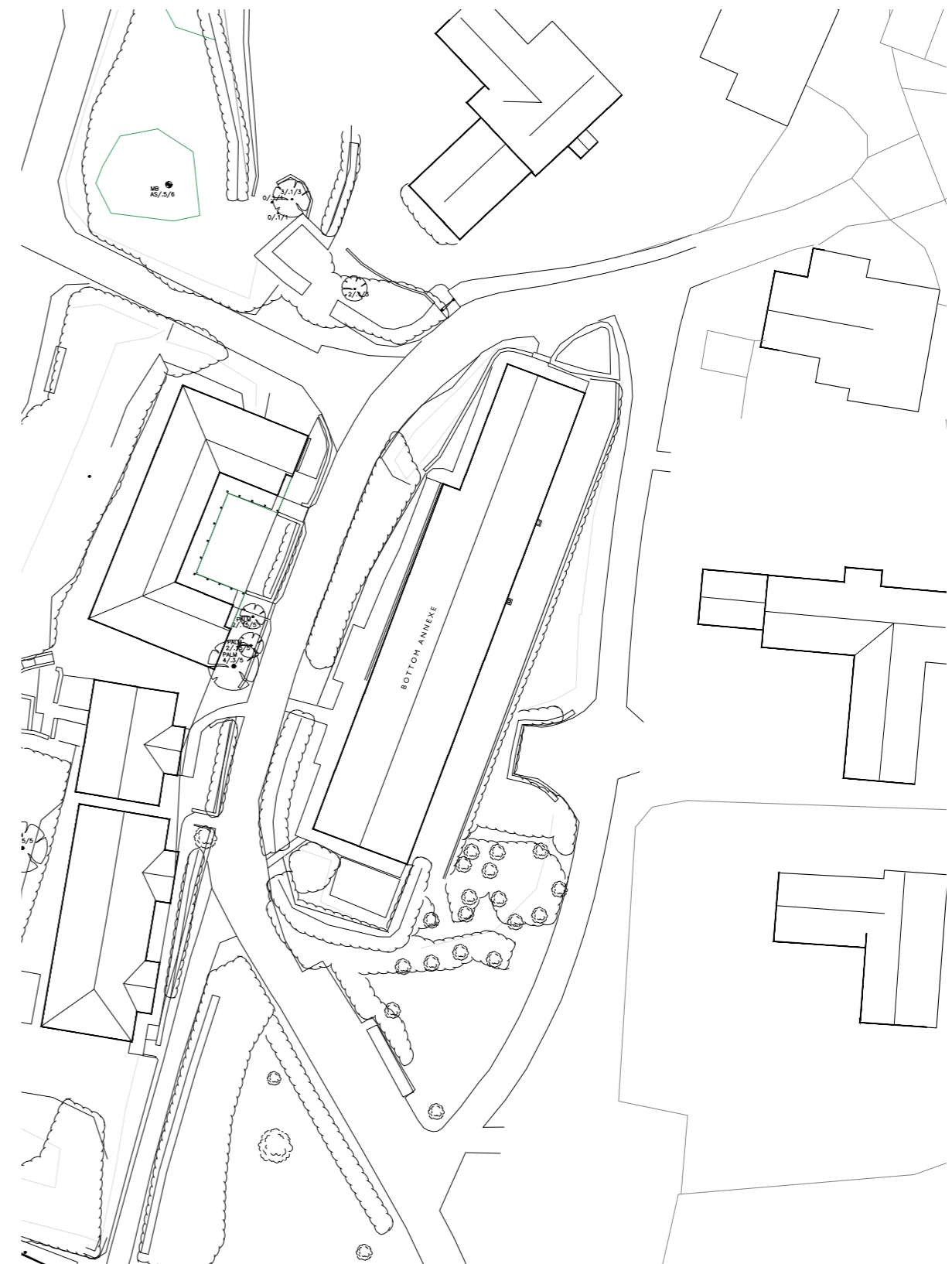
Tresco is unique on the Isles of Scilly in that the Island is leased and managed by a single family and the residents are generally staff of the Estate, partners and children of Estate staff, have retired after many years of working on the Estate or teachers at the school. Having the right mix and quality of staff housing for the present and future is key to the development of the business and the maintenance of an active, vibrant community that embraces the very young and very old.

With the return of the Helicopter service, Tresco's strategic goal is to continue to change the current business model from a seasonal operation to an all year round offering. This approach will rely on a more permanent staffing structure, with more staff making the Island their permanent home, all year round. This requires a fundamental change to staff accommodation requirements. Whilst there will be a continued requirement for accommodation for the summer influx of seasonal staff, much of the existing accommodation stock, including the existing bottom annexe, are rooms with shared facilities, which are not appropriate for permanent year-round use.

In accordance with the policy set out in the local plan, this development provides good quality accommodation for singles and couples. They are attractive, well designed and spacious, located in a pleasant tucked away spot close to the existing community of staff housing. They have been designed to be as sustainable as possible, through the use of natural low carbon materials, reduction in energy use, and renewable energy generation.

To attract the highest quality staff the business needs to provide the highest quality accommodation. Tresco Island are continuously striving as a business to improve the living and working conditions of its staff and therefore the wider community. This helps the business attract and retain staff. Many of the existing staff have worked on Tresco for decades, as do their children who the estate also endeavour to employ and house. This continuity is important to the business and community.

The proposed works form part of Tresco Island's policy for ongoing investment in the tourism industry on the island. Invariably investment on Tresco has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, employment, restaurant and retail services benefiting across the archipelago.



Existing Site Plan

## 2. SITE & EXISTING BUILDING

The application site is located in the Old Grimsby area of Tresco. It is set behind and above the existing waterfront houses looking onto Raven's Porth Beach, clearly within the established development boundary, and bounded and shielded by existing buildings and development on all sides.

The site is accessed via Back Lane, which runs above and to the west of Bottom Annexe, parallel to the building. Other buildings along Back Lane, including Back Lane Cottages are set at a higher level, overlooking the site.

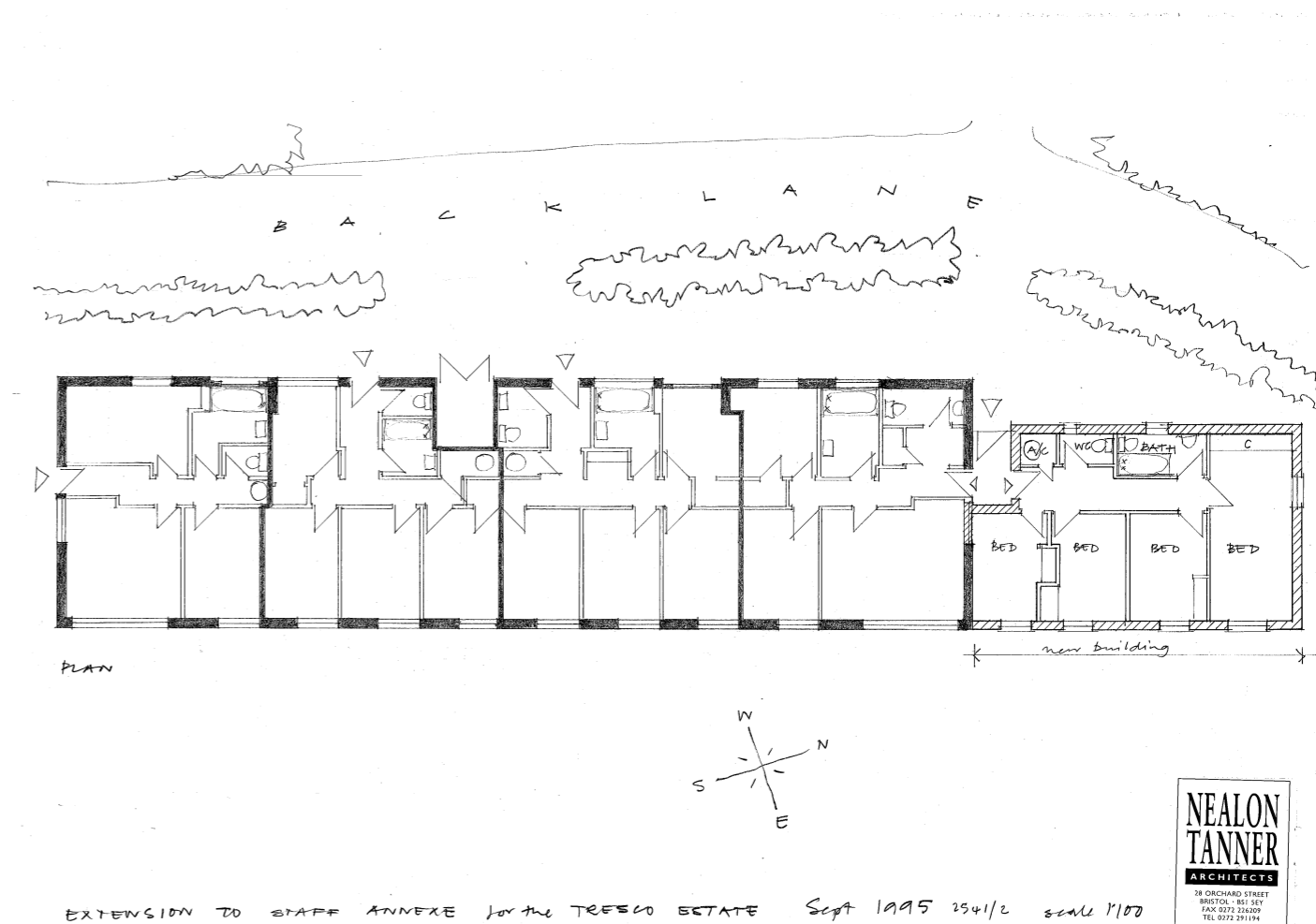
Bottom Annexe in a central location on the island with access to facilities and transport, and would extend an existing enclave of other staff / worker units. It is also in close proximity to many of the tourist facilities and accommodation on the island, so is ideally suited for staff accommodation.

The existing building on the site is single storey and low slung, with a single ridge running from north to south. The building steps inwards at the northern end, where it has been previously extended. The main volume is constructed in single skin blockwork and rendered, with an asbestos slate roof.

The existing building fabric is poorly constructed and has poor thermal performance. The walls between units are thin and have poor acoustic performance, and existing services are outdated and in poor condition.

Internally, the layout is complex, with limited shared facilities. It is a registered House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), with 17 bedrooms with 3 doubles and 14 singles, so houses a maximum of 20 residents sharing 4 bathrooms and a single kitchen facility.

This arrangement is considered less desirable, and Tresco Island have issues attracting and retaining staff that are allocated accommodation at Bottom Annexe.



Existing Building Plans

## 3. PLANNING STATEMENT

### PLANNING CONTEXT

This proposal has been prepared within the context of a policy framework set out in both primary legislation and national and local planning policy. A summary of this framework is set out below.

#### Primary Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990

The application site is situated within a Conservation Area and as such there is a requirement that the proposed development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

#### The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Tresco, along with the whole of the Isles of Scilly is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In considering proposals located within AONB's, there is a consequential requirement for Local Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.

#### The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations

There is a duty for the Local Authority to assess the impact of proposed development on any European Protected Species.

### PLANNING POLICY

#### National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF)

This important policy document outlines the Government's over arching planning policies and details of how they expect these to be applied by Local Planning Authorities. The NPPF makes clear that there is a presumption in favour of development and confirms that the starting point for decision making is the statutory Development Plan. Local Planning policy is expected to conform with the requirements of the NPPF.

#### Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015-2030

The Isles of Scilly Local Plan sets out a spatial strategy for the next 15 years and provides a vision for the islands, along with key objectives. The plan seeks to strike a balance between protecting and enhancing the high quality environment, whilst ensuring the islands communities and economy to grow sustainably. Central to achieving this objective will be the creation of new employment opportunities and in particular, improving the quality of the tourism experience on the islands.

The Local Plan makes clear that tourism will be a key driver for the islands' economy, recognising that whilst historically this grew rapidly, more recently the Islands' tourism economy has suffered a decline. Visitor numbers have dropped, (alongside a contraction in fishing and farming). The Local

Plan records that it must be responsive to the specific challenges it faces, (including the decline in tourism) and work proactively with applicants and investors to, 'secure developments that improve the economic and social conditions'. The Plan states that the focus will therefore be on finding solutions, 'to secure development that sustains the islands' future'.

The Local Plan specifically acknowledges the part tourism will play in sustaining the economy of the islands. It states, 'there is a need to capitalise on and strengthen the quality and value of tourism, given it will continue to dominate the islands' economy over the plan period'. It goes on to say, 'creating a successful economy will require businesses to develop new opportunities, become more productive, and continually adapt to new challenges'.

The recognition within the Local Plan that tourism is a key player in the islands' economy and that there is a requirement to strengthen and adapt this in the future, provides an important policy context for the consideration of these proposals. Whilst there are no specific employment developments identified in the Local Plan, the policy framework generally encourages proposals that will help strengthen and diversify the islands' economy.

The Local Plan acknowledges the fact that tourism is likely to remain the largest part of the economy over the plan period. For this reason, the Plan states that it is important this sector is supported in, 'improving the quality of its offer, and that it responds to the expectations of its visitors'. The Plan goes on to state, 'A key challenge is to maximise the quality of its product and provide an offer that appeals to a range of visitors, including opening up to, or creating, new tourism markets and niches'.

The Local Plan acknowledges that the provision of quality staff accommodation is a key requirement in the ongoing development of the tourism sector on the islands. These proposals respond directly to the challenge of providing this accommodation.

Policy WC1 – General Employment Policy makes clear that development proposals that strengthen, enhance and diversify the islands' economy will be supported where they are appropriately designed, scaled and located, in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.

Policy WC5 - Visitor Economy and Tourism Developments sets out proposals for new or upgraded tourism development. Such proposals will be permitted where they, inter alia:

- (a) make a positive contribution to the provision of high quality sustainable tourism on the islands;
- (b) are located in sustainable and accessible locations; and
- (c) are appropriate to the site and its surroundings in terms of activity, scale and design; and
- (d) do not result in an unacceptable impact on the environment or residential amenities in accordance with other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Policy WC5 also records that tourism developments will be particularly encouraged where it is demonstrated that, inter alia, they extend the tourism season and increase productivity and wages in tourism.

The policies within the Local Plan also provide a range of policies designed to protect the landscape character (Policy OE1) as well as the natural (Policy OE2) and historic environment (Policy OE3).

The key policy within the Local Plan that relates to these proposals is Policy LC4 Staff Accommodation. As a small island-based community, there is a need for Scilly to retain a balanced workforce. Consequently, the plan notes that staff accommodation needs cannot be met outside the islands, due to the expense and logistics of commuting to and from the mainland. Policy LC4 recognises that additional staff accommodation may be required for businesses or organisations.

The Policy sets out a number of specific requirements, recording that new staff accommodation will be permitted where:

- a. It can be demonstrated that there is a functional and operational need;
- b. the size and type of the proposed is appropriate to the functional and operational needs of the business or organisation; and
- c. on an off-island, the proposed accommodation is located within an existing building or well-related to the existing business.

Policy LC4 records that all staff accommodation permitted will be subject to occupancy restrictions. In addition, the policy sets out two further requirements in respect of seasonal staff accommodation:

- a. It is located in an area that relates to the business, where possible; and
- b. does not cause harm to the residential amenity through staff working unsociable hours.

The proposals contained with this application have been prepared to respond to the specific requirements of Policy LC4.

### **Isles of Scilly Design Guide 2007**

The Isles of Scilly Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that forms part of the local Development Plan. This states that “It is important that the nature of the surrounding area is understood and reflected in any development proposal. Without this awareness it is likely that a development will be unsympathetic”.

## 4. PROPOSALS

### Form

It is proposed that the existing 'Bottom Annexe', which is no longer fit for purpose, is demolished, and replaced with two new low slung, single storey terraces, consisting of 11 separate ensuite double bedroom units and 2 shared kitchens. The proposed buildings take their form from the traditional Tresco vernacular and the 'island style' that has been developed on Tresco over the last ~30 years.

The terraces would be single story and linear, with dual pitched roofs, oriented north to south, replicating the form of the existing building. The two terraces would be staggered slightly, to avoid the appearance of a continuous linear development.

A central laundry and plant room with a low pitched flat roof would connect the two terraces, which would break up the ridge line and introduce variation into the scale of the proposals.

The proposals would borrow features from the typical 'Tresco Style', with timber cladding, recessed porches and glazed screens, providing natural light into the shared living spaces.

### Scale

The low slung, single storey scale of development would be appropriate to this backland infill site, and would be similar in scale to the building it would be replacing.

The units are 4.9m high at the ridge and 2.2m high at the eaves. This modest scale of development ensures that the proposals would have minimal visual impact, despite the raised ground level of the plot above the beachfront houses on Raven's Porth Beach.

The ridge height of the proposed terraces would be +11.1m, which is comparable to the existing Bottom Annexe building, and similar or lower than the ridge heights of the waterfront cottages below, which range from +10.80 to +12.06.

Consequently, the proposals would be of very low prominence when viewed from the beach or across the harbour, and certainly no worse than the existing building.

Back Lane, and the terraces above the 'Bottom Annexe' site, are set well above the proposed site. The proposals are well shielded by existing fencing, planting and the change in level, and as such the proposed development would have no impact on the aspect and views from these buildings.



Proposed Elevations

## Use/Layout

The northern terrace would consist of five units, each with an ensuite double bedroom, separate entrance, plenty of storage and access to a shared garden space. Each unit would be designed to house an individual or couple.

There would be a central shared kitchen/living/dining space for use by these units. The southern terrace would be similar, housing six ensuite double bedroom units and a shared kitchen.

A shared laundry and plant room would lie between the two terraces, breaking up the form and accessible to all residents.

Access to the building would remain on the western side from Back Lane as existing, with the bedroom and living spaces facing east towards the beach and harbour.

## Materials

The buildings would take their material palette from the existing vernacular on the islands, continuing an architectural language that has developed over recent decades into a Tresco style. This style employs local natural materials and traditional details. The proposed staff accommodation terraces would be clad in a mixture of a horizontal and vertical cedar boarding, left untreated and allowed to silver naturally.

Roofs would be predominantly covered with natural slate. This material palette is appropriate to the site, reflecting both the surroundings and nearby buildings, respecting the character and setting of the conservation area. A PV array would be integrated into the roof on the south-east elevation to provide renewable electricity generation for the new accommodation. They would be discreet and recessed into the roof surface to minimise their visual prominence. The laundry link would be roofed in standing seam zinc, to allow a lower pitch and provide a visual break between the two volumes.

This material palette is appropriate to the site and would reflect both the surroundings and nearby buildings, respecting the character and setting of the conservation area.



Proposed Site Plan

## 5. SETTING

The plot lies within the Isles of Scilly AONB & Conservation Area, which covers Treско in its entirety.

The proposals would replace an existing building, in an area defined as 'Settlement' on the Landscape Character Map within the Draft Isles of Scilly Conservation Area Character Statement.

The proposals have been developed with due consideration of the Conservation Area and AONB setting. The design of the proposed buildings responds to the characteristics and historic context of the area, the relationship with existing proximate buildings, and the landscape character.

The form, scale, massing and character of the proposed buildings would continue established existing development patterns, including that of the existing building; staggered linear terraces that follow the existing contours.

The proposals would replace an existing building, and the site is shielded by an established hedgerow perimeter, which would be retained. The terraces would be single storey, with ridge heights that are at or below the row of seafront terraces. As a result, the development

would be largely concealed from view. In addition, the proposed building would have no greater visual impact than the existing building it is replacing; with comparable eaves and ridge heights. Rather, the proposed building would generally enhance the visual appearance of this area.

Any perceived harm caused by the visual impact of the proposed buildings is arguably mitigated by their proposed form and materials responding to the traditional buildings and vernacular on the island, and the improved accommodation and opportunities that the buildings would provide for local workers.

The proposals are therefore considered to be the type of sustainable development for which the NPPF establishes a strong presumption and it would align with relevant national and local policy.

### Ecology

A day roost for an individual common pipistrelle bat was identified in one of the roof voids of the existing building during two emergence surveys.

A licence for the demolition works will be obtained from Natural England prior to commencement, and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented in accordance with the Plan For Ecology Bat Survey Report August 2023.

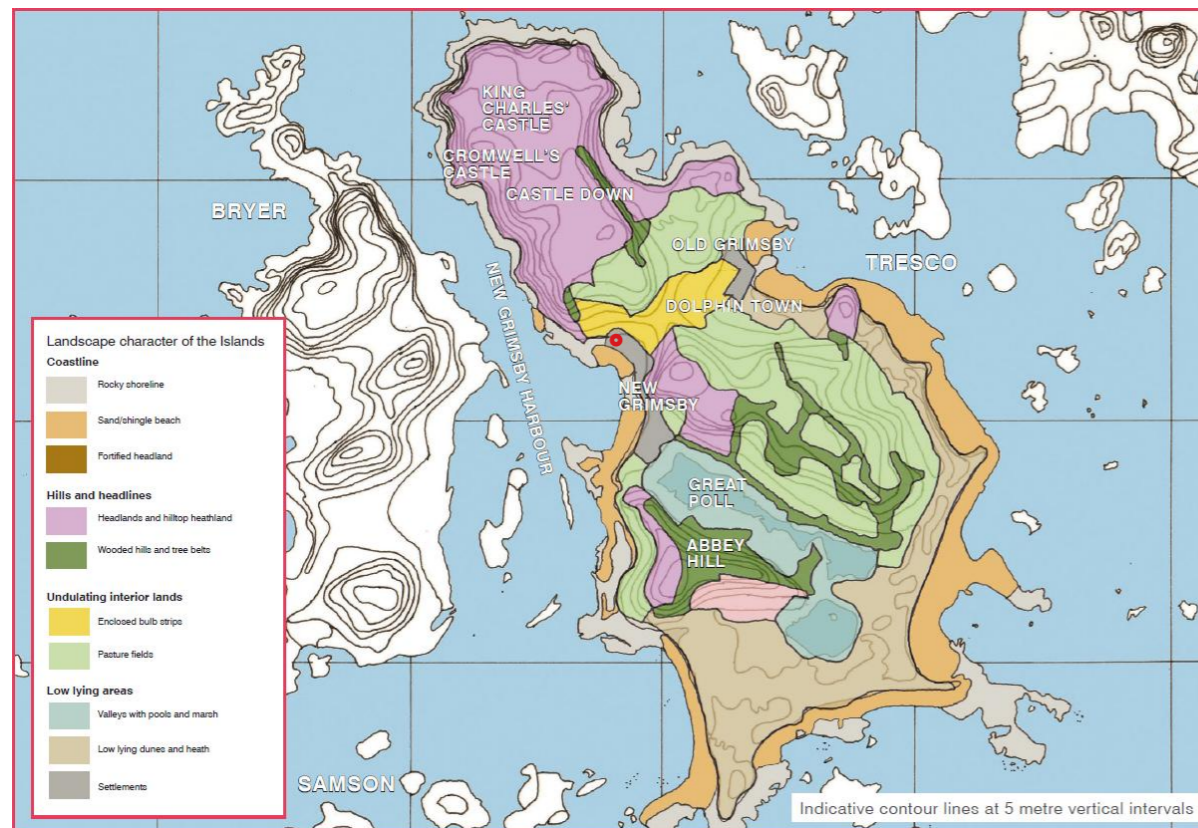


Figure 20 Landscape character on Treско

Landscape Character Map Extract from the Draft Isles of Scilly Conservation Area Character Statement  
The site is identified as 'Settlement' (grey shaded).



## 6. SUSTAINABILITY

### Context

The underlying principle behind the scheme is economic, social and environmental sustainability. Improvements are made through clean energy, with reductions in emissions and reduced reliance on carbon fuels, in line with Council policy.

### Social

The proposal would provide improved worker accommodation to the islands. This will improve the housing standards for the local families of existing staff that live on the island.

Providing more high quality permanent accommodation would reduce the reliance on a influx of seasonal workers, providing better opportunities for local people to work and make their home on the island.

The proposed development would allow the Island to extend and further improve its tourist offering, thereby enabling visitors to access Scilly's unique cultural and heritage assets throughout the year.

### Economic

There is currently a shortage of high quality worker accommodation. Changing tourism patterns and an extended tourist season require a greater permanent staff presence on the island. This requires accommodation that is spacious and comfortable enough to be suitable for individuals and couples to stay on the island throughout the year.

Attractive accommodation is also essential in the recruitment and retention of high quality permanent staff. As such the proposals would support the island economy.

Inevitably, investment on Tresco has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, employment of local people, restaurant and retail services across the islands benefiting.

### Environmental

The proposals would use an existing, previously developed plot. The existing building fabric is poorly constructed, and has poor thermal performance.

The proposed construction would employ lightweight construction methods and materials.

The detailed design would be developed to minimise energy use and the building's carbon footprint, both in the construction works and in ongoing use. The following energy strategy outlines this approach in detail.

### Embodied Energy In Construction

A considerable proportion of a building's carbon footprint is attributable to the manufacturing and transportation of building materials. To minimise this the buildings would be constructed with a timber frame and with timber cladding; which are low embodied energy, carbon sequestering materials when sourced from sustainable forestry.

Highly insulated prefabricated timber cassette panels would be manufactured on the mainland and shipped over to reduce wastage and construction time on site.

The building's exterior would be clad in long lasting materials, and installed with robust detailing, capable of withstanding the marine environment. Improved life span ensures a better return on the energy expended in construction.

Natural materials would be used wherever possible, these include slate roofing and timber cedar cladding. The specification would be developed with reference to the BRE Green Guide to Specification to evaluate the environmental credentials of the materials procured in construction.

A Site Waste Management Plan detailing handling and recycling of building materials is included in the accompanying documentation. Recycling of materials once the building is in use would be dealt with by the Island's central arrangements, where re-use and composting of waste products is managed across the island.

### Heat Loss and Energy Use

The proposals would take a 'fabric first' approach to energy reduction, seeking to minimise consumption from the outset through the use of passive design principles. These would include optimising orientation and massing, as well as ensuring the use of high-performance building fabric.

The simple linear form will reduce the surface area to volume ratio, minimising heat loss. Good levels of glazing for the living areas will reduce the need for artificial light. The arrangement of opening windows on both sides of the dwelling allows natural cross ventilation which in the summer will help maintain even, comfortable temperatures.

The prefabricated timber framed building envelope can achieve excellent levels of insulation, with minimal thermal bridging. Off-site manufacturing ensures precision construction, with improved air tightness and thermal performance beyond building regulations standards.

U-value performance of typical building fabric elements would be as follows:

Element	B Reg.s Min.	Proposed
Walls	0.26 W/m <sup>2</sup> K	0.16W/m <sup>2</sup> K
Roof	0.16 W/m <sup>2</sup> K	0.15W/m <sup>2</sup> K
Floor	0.18 W/m <sup>2</sup> K	0.17W/m <sup>2</sup> K

This would be a significant improvement on the performance of the existing building fabric. High performance standards would dramatically reduce the energy required to heat the property.

The use of new double glazed windows would: improve air tightness; improve thermal performance; increase the amount of natural light entering the property; and reduce the energy demand from space heating and artificial lighting as a consequence

### Renewable Energy Sources

Solar PV arrays spread across the terraces would be installed as part of the development. The energy and carbon associated with the manufacture and installation of the PV panels would be covered by 3 years of generation in this location.

The buildings' heating and hot water system would be entirely electric, avoiding any reliance on the import of carbon producing fossil fuels. This approach is particularly effective on Tresco, where the temperate climate combined with a super insulated fabric ensures very low heating requirements. Heating and hot water systems would be powered by locally generated electricity from the PV array.

Lighting can add significantly to the electrical loads. All internal and external lighting will use low energy lamps and bulbs. External lighting will also be controlled by appropriate timing and daylight sensor devices to minimise energy consumption.

### Transport

Transport on Tresco is by foot or bicycle and there are no private cars. Vehicles employed to distribute goods around the island are typically electric golf carts.

### Water and Sewage

The island is self-sufficient in harvesting and distributing potable water, and in collecting and treating sewage effluent. Large-scale centralised management of these services is considerably more efficient and effective than micro-measures associated with individual dwellings. As this is a replacement building, there is already sufficient capacity in the existing system for the proposed accommodation units.

The proposals have been designed to minimise water usage. Low water use appliances would be specified where possible, including dual-flush toilets and aerating nozzles throughout.

Excess surface water will be discharged into soakaways.

## 7. FLOOD RISK

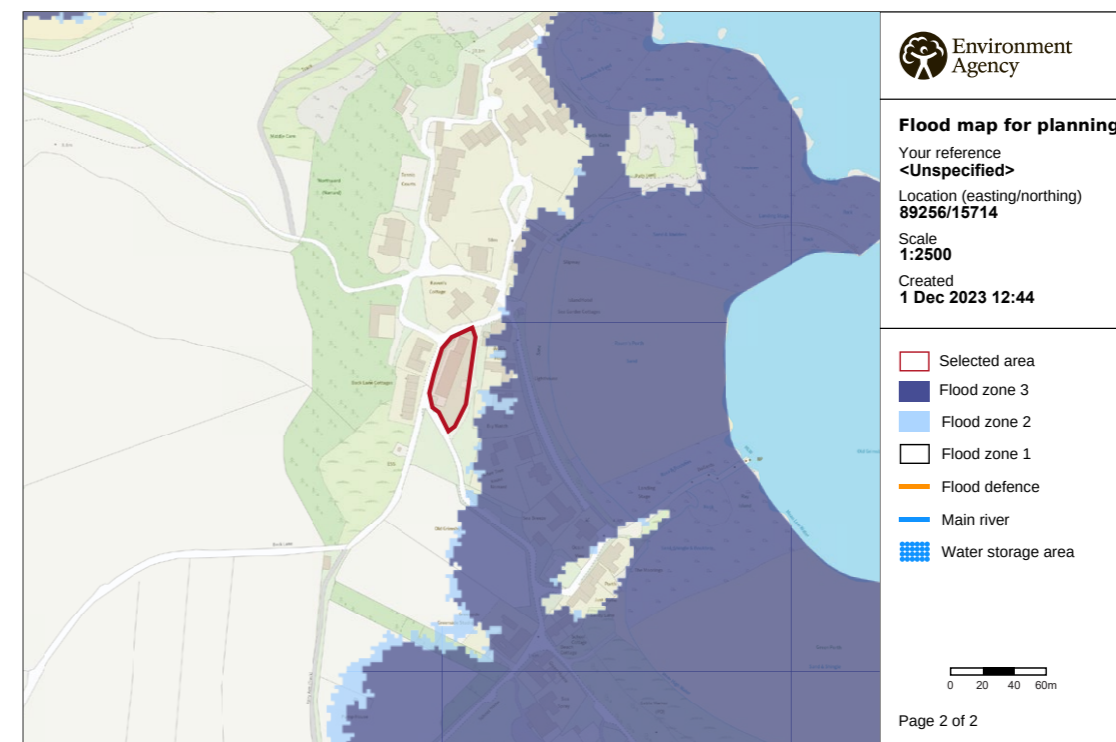
The proposed site is identified on the environment agency maps as being located in Flood Zone 1.

Areas deemed to be in flood zone 1 have been shown to be at less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year, (i.e. a 1:1000 year chance). As such the development should not face any restrictions due to flood risk.

The local plan requires a min ground floor level of +5.000m for any new development.

The proposed units have a minimum floor level of +6.40m.

The plot is in a well-protected part of the coastline, set back from the seafront and the existing row of seafront cottages.



Flood Risk Map

## 8. ACCESS

### Outside

Access to the site would remain unchanged. Back Lane runs to the west of the plot, and would provide sufficient access to the units.

The absence of cars on Tresco creates a safe, peaceful and refreshing environment and reduces emissions. Most visitors hire bicycles or walk, but for staff and less mobile guests, golf buggies are available. Back Lane would provide space for a golf cart to turn, park and unload in relative proximity to the entrances. The accommodation would be in close proximity to many of the tourist facilities and accommodation on the island.

There would be no overall increase in accommodation units, so Tresco's emergency services would have sufficient existing capacity.

### Inside

The buildings has been designed to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations as a minimum standard. Provision of ground floor bedrooms and living spaces, level access throughout, generous circulation spaces and glazing allowing views out for seated occupants would ensure that the units could be occupied by all.

This will be a significant improvement over the existing staff accommodation stock, including the existing Bottom Annexe, which is typically cramped and inaccessible.



## 9. CONCLUSION

In line with local plan policy, which recognises that staff accommodation needs - necessary to support tourism - cannot be met outside the islands, the proposed staff accommodation development aims to address the shortage of good quality staff accommodation on Tresco.

The application seeks to replace the existing Bottom Annexe, which provides poor quality, cramped and undesirable accommodation with higher quality and better performing accommodation units, which would support Tresco Island in attracted and retaining staff, which is essential to support the strengthening of the tourism industry to the Island.

The form, scale, character and materiality of the proposed buildings are designed to be appropriate to the character and setting of the conservation area, preserving the vernacular character that has developed across the Island.

Tresco's success is integral to the economic prosperity of the island group as a whole, its contribution sustains many other local services including transport, employment, restaurant and retail across the archipelago.