

TRESCO RACKET TOWN

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Contents & Introduction

Introduction	p 1
Existing	p 2
Proposed	p 3
Planning Policy	p5
Environmental Strategy	p 6
Access & Summary	p 7

INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application to refurbish and extend the cottage 'Racket Town' located on Treseo.

The existing dwelling is habitable, but is somewhat under-serviced by modern standards. It has a poor energy efficiency performance rating, and parts of the building that were constructed in lightweight materials are now showing signs of deterioration.

The proposed works form part of Treseo Island's policy for ongoing investment in improved accommodation for visitors to the island. Inevitably investment on Treseo has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, restaurant and retail services across the islands benefiting.



EXISTING

Racket Town is sited on Tresco on south facing inland plot overlooking the great pool. The house is situated 200m east of New Grimsby, but is set distinctly away from the settlement cluster. The plot is in isolation from other buildings with the exception of a modern agricultural barn to the south.

The site lies within the Isles of Scilly National Landscape and Conservation Area.

The house is a compact traditional island bungalow, oriented north – south and set into the sloping hillside.

The cottage itself is easily missed from the road that passes by on the northern side, enveloped as it is in garden space and lush green plant-life. The dwelling houses 3 bedrooms, a combined living and dining space and compact kitchen.

The original part of the cottage was constructed in granite masonry, which is still visible on the western elevation. It has subsequently been extended along its eastern side, with a timber framed and boarded extension, and a new expansive tiled roof that has subsumed the footprint of the original cottage. An additional bedroom and bathroom were also added in a new wing to the southeast. The bedroom extension fails to engage in a satisfactory manner with the existing cottage, and somewhat spoils the southern elevation with its disjointed appearance.

The house is habitable, but the cellular nature of the existing layout does not suit 21st Century living arrangements. Internally rooms are small and circulation is dark and labyrinthine. The building fabric, is in most part structurally sound, but was constructed before modern insulation standards. Consequently, the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the property requires some improvement. Some parts of the building that were constructed in lightweight materials are now showing signs of deterioration and need replacing.



PROPOSALS

The proposed alterations to Racket Town from part of Tresco Island’s ongoing strategy of investment into improving the quality and diversity of accommodation on the island. The alterations would improve the architecture of the existing building, both in terms of the internal layout and spaces, its external appearance, and would also improve the thermal performance of the cottage.

Consent was previously granted in 2020 for more extensive works, which included a larger extension to the existing cottage, a larger new wing, a new outbuilding and more extensive works to the grounds.

The modifications and extensions would be vernacular in style, taking it cues from the existing building, and respecting the character of the conservation area. Where more contemporary elements are proposed these continue an architectural language that has been established on Tresco over the last 30 years, using natural materials like untreated timber, in a manner sensitive and appropriate to the existing architecture and natural landscape.

The existing extension along the eastern side of the original cottage is poorly constructed. The walls of this wing would be reconstructed to meet modern performance standards, and the internal layout reconfigured to house an ensuite bedroom and a more generous circulation space. This would remove the small, cellular spaces to create more practical spaces for modern living.

The existing SE bedroom extension would be demolished, replaced with a new wing oriented east - west over the existing footprint. The new wing would house a further ensuite bedroom, WC and a new front entrance to the cottage. The new wing would be narrower than the existing dwelling, with lower ridge and eaves heights and a hipped roof engaging with the existing roof over the main dwelling.

The southern wall of the original part of the cottage – which again has been constructed in lightweight materials – would be reconstructed and clad in natural timber. The internal layout would be altered to house a new south facing sitting room, connected to a reconfigured kitchen and dining area, and a new ensuite bedroom. Glazed screens would be introduced to provide natural light and views out from the gable. Here the roof would oversail, supported on two granite piers, to create a covered canopy outside these rooms.



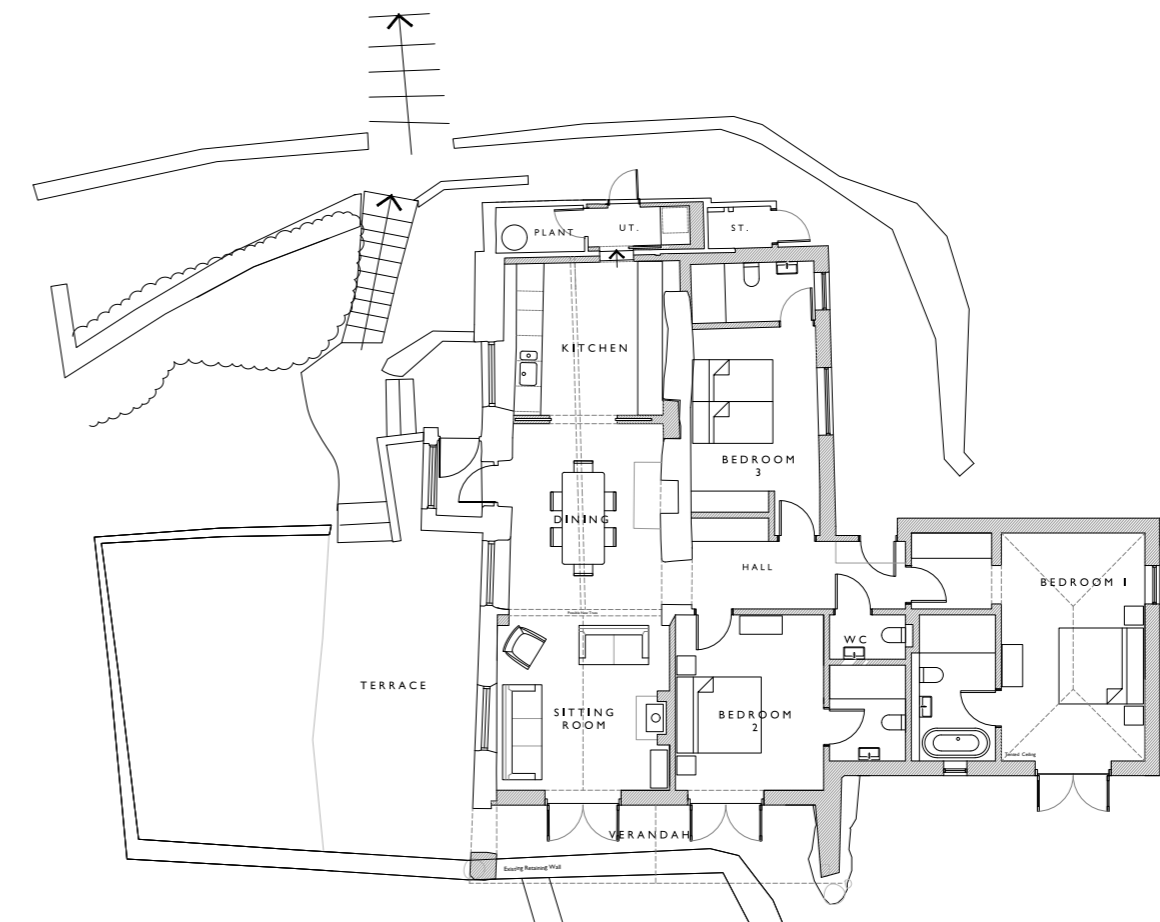
SOUTH ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

WEST ELEVATION

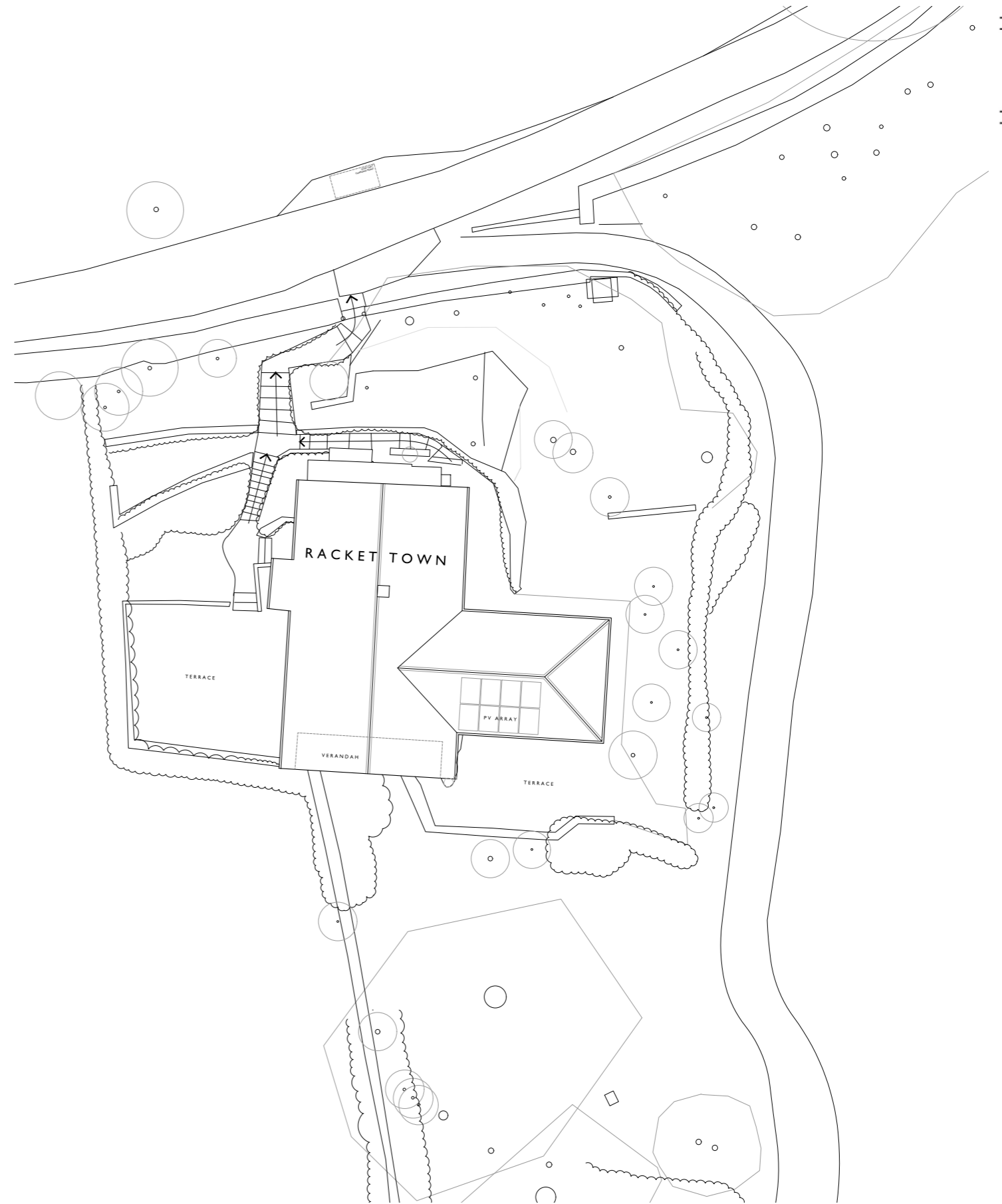


The proposed materials would reflect their surroundings and continue the palette established on the existing building, and the island as whole. This would include a palette of tiled roof, timber joinery, and cedar boarded walls with elements of granite masonry.

Some minor alterations to the existing landscape would also be proposed to accommodate the new wing.

The existing house is already connected to the island's electric and water supply. Tresco has ample water and electrical supplies to accommodate this modest development.

The scheme will have minimal outside lighting to respect the dark skies policy of the local plan.



PLANNING POLICY

The Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015-2030 highlights the importance of tourism to the Islands' economy, and in particular recognises the need for good quality visitors accommodation on the Islands.

“314. A strong tourism economy will help support and maintain services and community facilities on the islands, especially on the off-islands, and contribute to the management of the environment. Fundamentally, tourism supports vital transport links connecting the islands to the mainland, as well as between the islands.

315. Given the importance of tourism, it is essential that the tourism sector is ready to continually improve its offer and respond to the needs of visitors. New tourism development should enrich and enhance the islands' assets and resources, rather than harming the very character, quality and beauty that make them attractive to visitors and residents.

316. New visitor accommodation will be supported where it improves the quality and choice of existing tourism and responds to the changing needs and expectations of visitors, without reducing the housing stock available to meet the community's needs. It will be important to ensure a balance between the types of accommodation offered, to appeal to the widest range of visitors. There is an expectation that new tourism accommodation will be sustainable in terms of water and energy usage, and proposals must comply with Policies SS1 and SS2.

317. To sustain the islands as a sustainable and competitive visitor destination, it is necessary to support, wherever appropriate, improvements to existing visitor accommodation. Development proposals, however, that would result in the loss of existing housing stock will be resisted, whether this is serviced accommodation or self-catering, as this can exacerbate the housing problems of the islands. Reverting holiday letting accommodation back to permanent residential use, and resisting the loss of permanent homes to other forms of tourism accommodation, can have benefits of reducing the need for more housing development.

318. The re-use or extension of existing tourism accommodation and the provision of appropriately designed, scaled and sited new buildings can play an important part in the tourism industry, through the creation of self-catering accommodation or local craft or artists' studios, for example. Such development needs to be sensitively designed and sited so as to not have an adverse impact on the landscape, as required in Policy OE1 and Policy SS2.”

The proposals to improve the quality of the accommodation offer at Racket Town are considered to comply with these policies. The building has an established use as a holiday cottage, but has not been significantly altered in almost 30 years. The changes proposed herewith are in accordance with Tresco Island's policy of improving the quality of the existing building stock and accommodation. The success of this strategy has been key to the ongoing viability of the island economy.

The proposals to extend the property improves the island's accommodation provision. Inevitably investment on Tresco has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, restaurant and retail services across the islands benefiting.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The proposals have been developed to include a range of strategies to achieve sustainability in construction and in the building's ongoing use.

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 extension would be constructed from a lightweight and prefabricated timber frame; a thermally efficient and carbon sequestering construction method. This approach would also reduce carbon emissions involved in transporting materials to the island.

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

Indigenous natural materials would be used wherever possible. These would include reclaimed granite and some local timber. The specification would be developed with reference to the BRE Green Guide to Specification to evaluate the environmental credentials of the materials procured from further afield.

HEAT LOSS AND ENERGY USE:

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

The new building elements will have insulation that is far superior to the existing extension that is being replaced, this will reduce the energy required to heat the property. Improved double glazing would improve, air tightness, thermal performance and increase natural light entering the property, reducing the energy demand from space heating and artificial lighting.

The south facing elevation would incorporate glazed screens to maximise solar gain and reduce the heating requirements during the winter months. These are protected by an overhanging eaves and projecting roof over the gable to prevent overheating when the sun is high in the summer months.

The deep L-shaped plan of the dwelling would improve the surface area to volume ratio, reducing heat loss per unit of area.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES:

A new solar PV array would be provided on the south facing roof pitch of the new wing, which is angled and oriented to maximise electrical output. Excess power would be exported to the local grid. The energy and carbon associated with the manufacture and installation of the PV panels will be covered by 3 years of generation in this location.

The existing oil fired boiler would be removed. The dwelling would be heated using air-source heat pumps, which are typically 3 times more efficient than traditional direct electric heating methods. This approach is particularly effective on Tresco, where the temperate climate ensures operating efficiency is maintained through the year. These would be powered by locally generated electricity from the PV array, effectively creating a zero carbon heating system.

An additional stove would allow the property to be heated using fuel from local and sustainable sources. This is particularly effective to top up the heating in the winter when external temperatures and output from the PV array are reduced.

The scheme as whole would be also sustainable in the broader sense, supporting the economy of the Islands, and providing work for the people who live there

ACCESS

OUTSIDE:

Existing access to the plot will be unchanged

The absence of cars on Tresco creates a safe, peaceful and refreshing environment and reduces emissions. For less mobile guests, golf buggies or mobility scooters can be hired, but most visitors hire bicycles or walk.

Tresco's emergency services would have sufficient existing capacity to deal with the modest increase in scale of this property.

INSIDE:

Internally the modifications have been specifically developed to enable the property to cater for elderly occupants or visitors with impaired mobility. They would comply with Part M of the Building Regulations as a minimum standard. The following improvements have been made to improve the overall accessibility of the dwelling:

- New doorways would have improved clearance
- The front door would have a level threshold
- The dwelling would have level access throughout.
- New glazed screens would be floor to ceiling, ensuring views out for seated occupants.
- Generous circulation spaces would make the dwelling more accessible for wheelchair users or ambulant disabled occupants.
- There would be sufficient space to accommodate a carer if required.
- New services would be installed at heights to suit elderly / disabled occupants.
- Improved heating and comfort for elderly occupants.
- The dwelling would be all on one level.



SUMMARY

The purpose of this project is to provide enhanced accommodation for visitors to Tresco. Improving quality maintains the economic activity of the islands by responding to the changing expectations of the market, in accordance with both Tresco Island's ambitions and local planning policy.

The design of the alterations has taken into account the characteristics and historic context of the area. The bulk of the proposals are heavily screened by existing boundary planting and the existing building; as a consequence the visual impact of the proposals would be minimal.

The form, scale, massing and character of the proposed extension responds directly to the existing building, preserving the vernacular character of the building in the immediate setting, whilst ensuring the proposed additions are architecturally legible. The proposed materials would reflect the traditional and vernacular style across the island, in addition to providing a continuation of more recent patterns of development using natural materials including timber and glass in a low-key contemporary manner.