

**Hanjague, Rocky Hill, St Marys, Isles of Scilly**  
**P/25/071/HH**

## **Design and Floorspace Statement 10.09.25**

### **Design Brief**

The purpose of the proposal is to:

1. Improve the living accommodation by converting an en-suite bedroom into a “snug” lounge with attached office;
2. Improve connectivity to the garden by way of replacement of windows with French doors;
3. Improve utility / storage space by extension to form a boot room / utility;
4. Convert a redundant outbuilding into a children’s games room, and;
5. Replace the lost bedroom with a new en-suite bedroom above the games room, and;
6. Provide a bridge between the outbuilding and house to provide internal access between the two.

### **Configuration of House**

Whilst the house in its current form is of a reasonable size, it is poorly arranged with excessive bedroom / bathroom accommodation and insufficient living / storage space. It has been used as a holiday let or for B&B purposes for over 40 years where the need for additional living / storage accommodation is minimal.

The house sleeps eight people but it is difficult to seat eight people comfortably in the existing living room, hence the requirement for a snug and the consequent creation of a replacement bedroom in the outbuilding.

The conversion of one of the existing bedrooms also allows space for an office to be used to administer our client’s carpentry business. Given the lack of available tradespeople on Scilly we consider it advantageous to support this essential, skilled local business.

Likewise, storage and utility space is very restricted; the current owners are having to use the attic to store items that would normally be readily accessible, hence the need for the boot room.

The proposed extension very sensibly links an underused outbuilding with the house, providing a games / amenity room for our client’s children.

The property (including the redundant outbuilding) has a current gross internal floor area of approximately 175 sq m. The proposed accommodation has an approximate gross internal floor area of 224 sq m. We understand the new Local Plan requires justification for proposed accommodation that exceeds 30% over the National Minimum Space Standards, which for a four-bedroom, two storey, eight person property is 124 sq m plus 30% = 161 sq m.

To break down the floor areas further, we can confirm the following:

- |                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Current area of house:        | 154 sq m |
| 2. Current area of outbuilding:  | 21 sq m  |
| 3. Proposed area of outbuilding: | 43 sq m  |

4. Additional circulation space: 27 sq m

We make the following observations:

- The property (including the outbuilding) already exceeds the permitted floor area in existing form. Therefore, ANY extension, however modest, would technically be contrary to planning policy.
- Excluding the outbuilding, floor area is 154 sq m, just 4% below the permitted maximum of 161 sq m.
- However, because of the sprawling and poorly-designed nature of the existing accommodation much of this floor area is circulation space, awkwardly arranged and lacking in utility.
- The proposed increase is relatively modest overall, and defined by a desire to improve the aesthetics and function of the property.
- The increase in building footprint is actually relatively modest at just 12% of the completed floor area.
- To enable a sensible connection between the house and outbuilding, and to facilitate a second staircase, requires a substantial amount of circulation space. This is a significant contributory factor to the overall floorspace and one which doesn't increase number or size of bedrooms or living accommodation. To quantify this, the requirement to link the outbuilding with the existing house accounts for 27 sq m – over 55% of the extended space.
- The relatively “remote” nature of the new bedroom in the outbuilding creates the need for an additional bathroom, again a contributor to floorspace but one that doesn't lead to an intensification of use at the property.

### **Extension Design Benefits**

There are other benefits to the proposals:

- Improved thermal performance of the dwelling as whole, as a result of substantial upgrading of the building fabric to comply with Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel & Power). The property currently has a poor EPC rating Band “F”. We expect this to be improved to Band “D” after the works are completed.
- The property has been neglected for many years, with time-expired single glazed windows and doors, defective roof coverings, etc. These will be replaced with high-quality modern materials.

We would ask that these are taken into account when determining the application.

### **Planning Purpose**

We would respectfully question what useful planning purpose is being served imposing a space restriction on Hanjague? It is in a rural location, well-screened from neighbours with no overlooking, privacy or overcrowding issues. The closest neighbour is in support of the application.

The applicants are a local couple, one employed in an essential local service business, one self-employed running an essential local carpentry business, with children at the local school. This is their home, and they are therefore part of the “Local Market” quoted in the Local Plan. Approving the application will not remove the property from the Local Market – it will simply allow them to create a high-quality home from what is currently a neglected and dated house, and continue to enjoy living and working on the islands.

We understand the justification behind the policy is that, as houses get larger, they also get less affordable. The Local Plan states:

*“As all homes on the islands command higher than the national average house price, larger homes are therefore less likely to be affordable to the community, who have on average, lower incomes when compared to the national average. Consequently, proposals for extensions should not result in an imbalance in the existing housing stock, and ensure the retention of an appropriate mix of homes available to the community.*

*To prevent an imbalance of house types and sizes, and to help retain affordable homes, proposals that seek to extend an existing property significantly, by more than 30% above the minimum for the size of property, will be resisted unless there is a demonstrable proven need for a larger home”.*

But using floorspace as a measure of value is simply too blunt a tool to be anything like effective.

Size is clearly just one contributory factor to a property's value. But far more important factors in determining value (and therefore “affordability”) are:

- Location
- Environment
- Quality of accommodation
- Whether it enjoys a sea view

In fact, evidence shows that size of a property on Scilly is relatively unimportant in determining value.

To evidence this, Sibleys Chartered Surveyors have been instructed to analyse open market sales of houses & maisonettes on St Marys in excess of £400,000 over the past two years. We can confirm that Capital Values achieved range from £3,433 psm to £8,828 psm. Spreadsheet attached.

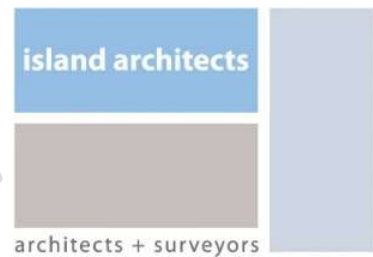
The highest rate achieved (for a small beachside bungalow) is over 2½ times more valuable per sq m than the lowest achieved (a large detached house). On this basis, a property of just 90 sq m could be worth the same as a 224 sq m property (the size of our clients' proposed completed dwelling). Therefore, using property size as a predictor of value, and in turn to inform planning policy, does not stand up to proper scrutiny.

Further examination of the evidence suggests strongly that larger properties are actually better value for money than smaller properties.

Which leads to the question - what do the LPA consider to be “affordable”? Clearly it was affordable to the present owners but may well not be affordable to those on lower incomes or with less capital. Scilly, like all areas, needs a mix of property types & sizes to cater for all demographics. Reducing the size of Hanjague will, in our opinion, do nothing to improve the affordability of Scilly generally and therefore no useful planning purpose is being served by imposing a floorspace restriction.

We are unaware of any empirical evidence to suggest the policy has actually helped to “retain affordable homes”?

Finally, it could reasonably be argued that a logical extension of the policy above is to introduce a further measure preventing homeowners from improving their properties, on the justification that better-presented homes with modern facilities will command higher prices and therefore be less “affordable”. We do not believe such a policy would command support locally, and therefore respectfully ask members to also question what is being served by the current policy.



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