

St Mary's Quay Project, Isles of Scilly

Statement of Significance



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this statement is to summarise the historical development of St Mary's Quay, particularly with regard to the different paving types existing along the various parts of its curtilage and the existing sea wall along the Middle Berth.

Most notably, this is important for the 'spine' of the quay, the Inner & Middle Berths, approximately split along the centreline between the relatively smooth flagstones of the vehicle way along the Western side, and the uneven setts of what is now the pedestrian walkway along the Eastern side.

Addressing the surfacing of a pedestrian path through the existing setts forms part of a project of improvements to the harbour facilities at St Mary's involving quay lengthening to broaden the choice of future ferry / freight vessels, improved freight handling facilities at the back of the Harbourside building and improved passenger check in, ticketing and baggage collection facilities.

Widening of the end of the Middle berth at the junction with the southern end of the Harbourside building is proposed, with the existing sea wall demolished to make way for this widening. Our proposals are to include for re-cladding the new sea wall in this location with reclaimed dressed granite stones from the demolished section.

The aim of this Statement is to assist in understanding the background to the existing situation, in order to inform the decision process for the proposal to either re-lay or replace part of the pedestrian area paving with something smoother, more comfortable and safer for the pedestrians, using a sensitive and meticulous approach to improve the passenger check-in noted above, and to justify the need for demolition of the sea wall with the proposed mitigation measures noted above.

2.0 EXISTING APPRIASAL

2.1 Historical Background

The quay is a Grade II Listed Building (under section 7 of the Planning Act 1990).

The Old Quay section was originally constructed by Francis Godolphin in approximately 1601 and later rebuilt in 1740 and 1748.

Subsequent alterations include an extension of the Quay to Rat Island in 1835, and an additional 40m extension in 1889.

The 'new' part of the quay, known as the Inner, Middle & Outer berths, was built between 1836 & 1839. This section will be impacted by the widening of the quay to the south of the Harbourside building.

Despite the accumulated historic information now available, there are differing opinions about whether the setts are recent, having been laid as part of pier infrastructure works approx. 10 years ago, or part of some earlier works during its life, or are perhaps even part of the original pier construction in 1839, and just re-laid badly during the more recent works.

As such, the quay has been subject to a history of change and adaptation.

Historical photographs from over the last 100 years are included within the Appendices illustrating the quay surfacing, and showing the appearance of the sea wall at Middle Berth.

2.2 Recent History of Surfacing

The Quay was widened in 1994.

In 1995, due to the collapse of the random rubble filling in the middle of the quay, repairs were carried out to the quay which included the re-laying of granite setts on the eastern half of the inner berth (the current pedestrianized walkway). This re-laying took place along the length of the Quay.

In 1996, the existing granite setts were re-laid in a similar pattern to the existing around and at the junction of the new (Inner berth) quay and Old Quay sections. The setts were re-laid in a 3:1 cement/sand mortar and fully pointed to provide a smooth surface to appropriate levels.

Recent discussions with the Local Planning Authority over the detail of the Application relating to the 1994 to 1996 repair / re-laying works by the Duchy of Cornwall have highlighted that there is no clear reason as to why Different granite setts have been used. However, there is much correspondence regarding the fact that any surfacing works must reflect the existing quay which may explain the difference.

In 2004, further public safety works were carried out on the quay under consented Listed Building Consent. A condition was imposed stating

“That all pointing works should match the existing surface of the Quay that is not being resurfaced, must be flush with the stone and that any excess mortar must be removed from the stone setts”.

Further correspondence from the Planning Authority stated that

“with regard to the cobbles, the colour of the mortar and style shall match the adjacent cobbled areas which are to be retained and not re-pointed. The difficulty in dealing with the joint sizes was acknowledged but the colour is to match as close as is practicable and mortar will not be ‘smeared’ onto the cobbles themselves.”

The assumption for this condition and the follow-on correspondence is the requirement to match the existing and again is part of the reason the setts are different.

Despite the accumulated historic information now available, there are differing opinions about whether the granite setts in the pedestrian zone (other than those re-laid at the junction of the Old Quay and Inner berth) are recent having been laid as part of some pier infrastructure works approx. 10 years ago, or part of some earlier works during its life, or are perhaps even part of the original pier construction in 1839, and just re-laid badly during the more recent works.

2.3 Description of Surfacing Proposals

An illustrative diagram has been included within the Appendices, which shows the respective areas of existing surfacing, also the locations from which the associated record photographs were taken.

The new quay section running from the Old Quay to the south end of the existing Harbourside Building is surface in 2 main paving types:

- The first runs along the western side of the quay “spine” and consists of granite flags laid in a very level and even pattern.
- The second surface consists of granite setts laid in a wide joint pattern (trying to line up with the adjacent coursing of the granite flags)
- The two surfaces are now separated by a line of pedestrian bollards

The existing quay edge running along the eastern edge consists of large, dressed granite coping stones.

Photographs of the existing surfacing are included within the Appendices.

The setts are smaller in size than the flags, and irregular in shape. It is believed that they may have been laid to a wide spacing to maintain their ‘coursing’ alignment with the adjacent larger flagstones and preserve their historical appearance, but this is debatable.

The present smooth-paved vehicle way is typically about 4m wide, but the junction line between this and the setts is ragged and variable at different points along the quay. The vehicle way increases to 5m wide at the mid-point passing place, although this runs into the area of the setts.

2.4 Current Use on Surfacing

The granite flagstones along the western length of the quay are now being used as the surfacing for a vehicle way for traffic to / from the freight yard located behind the existing Harbourside building. Traffic ranges from small cars (taxis) to small lorries (freight).

The granite setts are currently used as the paving surface within the pedestrian zone along the eastern side of the quay. As can be seen from the various photos, and as described elsewhere within this Statement, the setts have been lifted and re-laid over the years.

The re-laid pattern of setts now creates an uneven walking surface for users of the quay, in particular for passengers from the Scillonian ferry service from the mainland. A large number of these passengers are elderly with some being mobility impaired (walking sticks and wheelchairs). The uneven surface now carries the risk of falls and trips, particularly for this latter set of people.

Due to the uneven surface a large number of pedestrians now prefer to use the level surface of the vehicle way. This now means that pedestrians (particularly the mobility impaired) are being discouraged from using the pedestrian zone, causing potential risk from collision with quay traffic.

2.5 Consultations and Research on Surfacing

Below is a summary of the consultations held for the project where provision of a new surface for the pedestrian zone was specifically discussed.

Public Consultations

During initial design development a public presentation / consultation exercise was held on 25th April 2012 at the Wesleyan Chapel, Garrison Lane, St. Mary's. A summary of this exercise is included in a Statement of Community Involvement included as part of the Application for quay improvements including resurfacing part of the pedestrian zone.

Among the issues raised was the on-going safety concern of the uneven setts, the prevailing view being that they are much more uneven now than previously, and there is an on-going safety worry that pedestrians use the smoother, but more hazardous, flagstone vehicle way because the setts are uncomfortable, and perhaps even dangerous, to walk on.

Although one local resident noted that there had been no significant incidents between vehicles & pedestrians in his 50 years of recollection, he went on to state that the "cobblestones inside the bollards need attention, as unsuitable for pedestrians."

A large number of attendees were in favour of resurfacing, with some considering this "essential" to the future operation of the quay.

A further public presentation will be held on 29th August 2012 to present the resurfacing proposals and give the public and community the opportunity to comment.

Planning and English Heritage Consultations

Detailed discussions and meetings have been held with both the Local Planning Authority (Craig Dryden) and English Heritage (Simon Ramsden) during design development of the proposals through, and the main discussion points relating to the proposed re-surfacing are captured below:

Summary from meeting with Craig Dryden (Isles of Scilly Planning Dept.) dated 14.03.12:

- Reluctant to support the removal or alteration of the existing granite setts to create a flatter walking surface due to historical significance of material and appearance.
- External materials for the new build elements to be sympathetic / match those of the adjacent buildings

Summary from meeting with Simon Ramsden (English Heritage) dated 29.03.12:

- Stated that the principle of relaying the setts to form a flatter pedestrian foot path was broadly acceptable.
- Potentially re-laying the setts closer together may be more visually acceptable, a sample panel could then be agreed with both EH and the Local Planning Authority
- However, justification for works to the setts would need to be made to English Heritage as part of the Listed Building Application
- Called for a Statement of Significance, highlighting existing hard surfaces on the quay, containing any historical references such as photographs etc.
- EH to be informed of what has been previously been consented for re-surfacing of the quay.



Local Historical Research

Further historical research has been carried in collaboration with the Isles of Scilly Museum, for which particular thanks must be given to the curator/manager, Amanda Martin, who has been very helpful in providing historic photos and some indication of the timing of events. This research has been summarised within the Historical Background section earlier in this Statement, with selected photographs included within the Appendices.

3.0 SURFACING PROPOSALS

Two potential risks have been identified with the existing granite sett surfacing within the pedestrian zone of the main quay at St. Mary's:

- Risk of trips and falls due to the uneven surface of the re-laid setts and wide mortar joints
- Risk of pedestrian / vehicle collisions as people are discouraged from walking on the uneven surface

Having identified these risks we have now produced an Options Matrix (see below) which illustrates 4 options for addressing these risks through re-surfacing, along with the advantages / disadvantages of each option.

3.1 Options Matrix

Description:	Pros:	Cons:
Leave setts in place but rake out joints and re-grout to a higher level to achieve smoother surface.	Minimum impact in terms of work content & cost	Much of surface of setts will be covered with grout to achieve adequately smooth surface, aesthetically undesirable
Take up and relay setts closer together, ignoring alignment with flagstone coursing, using reclaimed stone from demolitions to make up shortfall	Joints will be neater, though random in relation to fully coursed flagstones.	Problem of grout covering of surfaces remains, due to uneven shape of setts
Ditto above, but introducing separating 'band' of dressed flagstones, perhaps 300mm wide, along current joint line to visually separate coursing of setts from flagstones.	Ditto above,	Same problem as above.
Form approx. 1.5m wide smooth pathway along seaward (eastern) side of bollards, using stone arising from demolition of quay wall at SW corner of Harbourside Building, redressed to match flagstones, with remaining margin of setts alongside quay edge.	Preferred solution, provided adequate stone available from demolitions, and cost not too prohibitive.	

3.2 Proposal Description

As can be seen from the previous Options Matrix the preferred option is to form a new smooth pathway approx.. 1.5m wide within the existing surface of setts, through removing the setts and laying granite flags to match the vehicle way on the western length of the Quay.

This will provide a level surface for pedestrians to walk on, reducing the risk of trips and falls for the mobility impaired, and encourage people to use the pedestrian zone rather than walk on the vehicle walkway.

A layout plan showing the orientation and extent of the new paving zone is included within the Appendices.

3.3 Impact

English Heritage's design guidance "Easy Access to Historic Landscapes", states the following on pp43:

"Surfaces – examples of good practice"

- *Research historic significance of routes and their materials*
- *Undertake regular maintenance to repair damage to path surfaces*
- *If there are options for modification, replace loose surfaces with an alternative firm, non-slip surface*
- *Re-lay uneven setts or slabs to create a level surface*
- *Point slabs or setts to create a level surface*
- *Incorporate a firm, level route within an area of cobbles or uneven surface*

Using granite flags to match existing will have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the quay hard surfacing, and also reflects the good practice as illustrated in the extract above, final bullet point. Using granite to match will mean that the materials will sympathetic to the adjoining existing and original surfacing fabric,

4.0 SEA WALL DEMOLITION

St. Mary's (Isles of Scilly) Harbour Revision Order 2007 (no. 1554) came into force on 31st May 2007. This HRO provides overall planning consent for the proposals and permitted development rights under the following sections:

4. Power to construct works
5. Power to deviate
6. Subsidiary works

The HRO was produced in conjunction with the Route Partnership's previous scheme whereby a new roadway was to be constructed "15m north of the existing quay wall (*commencing at the car park in front of Tregarthen's Hotel*), extending in a north-easterly, then northerly, then north-westerly direction for a distance of 216m and terminating on Rat Island....the enclosed are to constitute a widening on the west side of the Quay and to be used as a vehicular and pedestrian access.

However, due to a reduction in the available funding for improvements to the Quay, the proposals were reviewed to assess the need for improvements with only the essential items being retained in the current proposals.

4.1 Assessment of Need

Potential risks have been identified with the existing granite sea wall and pinch point at the southern entrance into the freight yard.

- Risk of freight traffic / pedestrian collisions due it being both a blind spot and a choke point for the entrance (only 3050mm wide at its narrowest point).
- Risk of freight traffic / taxi collisions due to it being a blind spot right by taxi parking / turning circles.
- Emergency vehicle turning is restricted due to taxi parking in this location.

The tourist trade is vital for the economic survival of the Isles of Scilly, providing the main source of income for the Isles. The current proposals seek to improve passenger management off/off the mainland ferry and off/on the off-island boats, along with improved freight handling facilities (primarily for chilled / frozen goods).

Better freight traffic management systems along with better taxi parking arrangements / turning circles are essential to meet the above priority. Passengers need to have safe and secure walking routes, and safe access to the taxi mini-buses used on St. Mary's. The risk of collision needs to be reduced through elimination of blind-spots and increasing widths of pinch-points. Emergency vehicle access / manoeuvring will also need to be considered.

4.2 Proposal Description

In order to meet the above needs the proposals include for demolition of the existing sea wall to a maximum length of 41.5m, which will give a width of 8.2m to the freight yard thereby allowing 2 way vehicle access into the yard.

The length of demolition is kept to a minimum in contrast to the Route Partnership scheme, with the wall demolished between Sibleys and the granite pier on Middle Berth.

4.3 Impact

The quay would be widened at this section, with a new sea wall constructed, to be clad in reclaimed granite dressed stone from the demolished wall section. The intention is to give the impression that the wall has been "straightened" rather than a new wall constructed. The use of reclaimed granite will match the existing retained sections of wall.



5.0 APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A – Existing Hard Landscaping Plan and Proposed Layout Plan

APPENDIX B – Historical Photographs

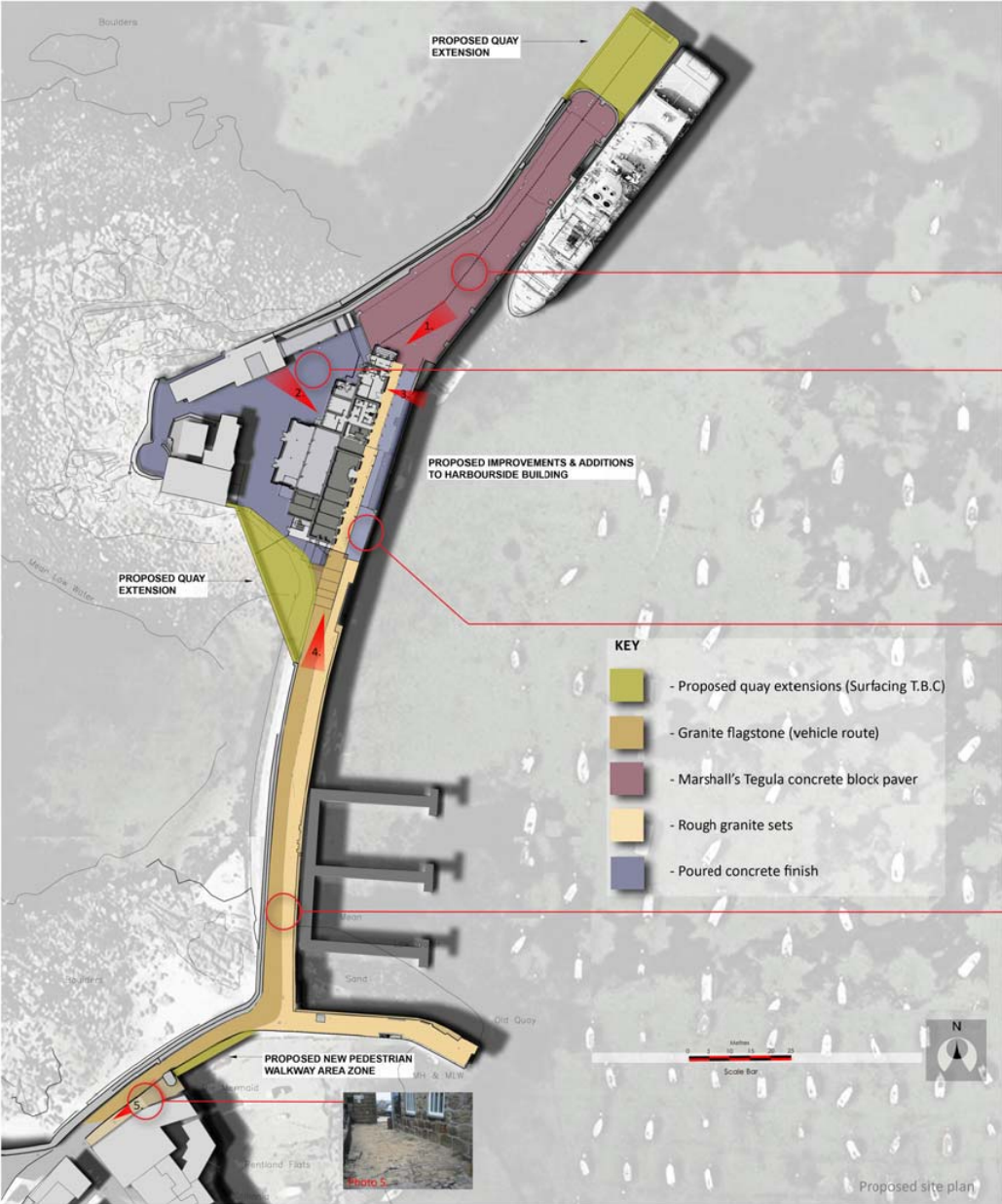
APPENDIX C – Existing Condition Photographs





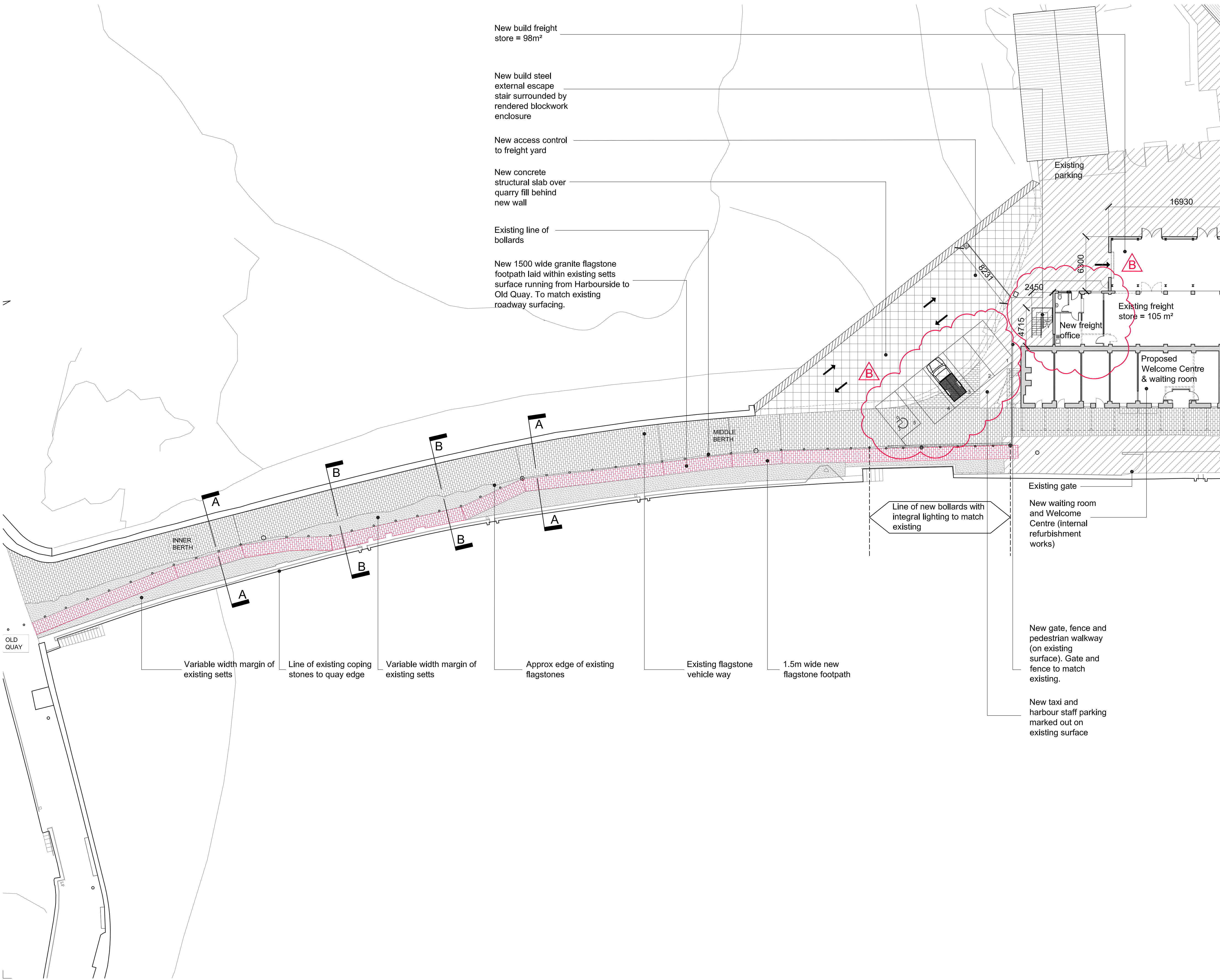
APPENDIX A – Proposed Layout Plan







APPENDIX A – Existing Hard Landscaping Plan



KEY:

- EXISTING SETT SURFACE
- EXISTING CONCRETE SURFACE
- EXISTING FLAGSTONE SURFACE
- NEW FLAGSTONE PATH IN SETT SURFACE TO MATCH EXISTING VEHICLE WAY SURFACE
- NEW CONCRETE SURFACE TO MATCH EXISTING
- DEMOLISHED STRUCTURE
- NEW BUILD STRUCTURE
- NEW BUILD SEA WALL

B	06.09.12	New freight office added, new stair amended Parking layout amended	CW	CW
A	02.08.12	New Layout to Drawing	CW	CW
Rev.	Date	Details	Drawn	Checked

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Project/Client:		Project No:	
St Mary's Quay		3711007	
Isles of Scilly		Dwg No:	
		L(20)05	
		Rev:	
		B	
Drawing:		Scale:	
Proposed Layout Plan		1:200 @A1	
Inner & Middle Berths		Drawn By:	
		EH	
		Date:	
		28.06.12	
		Checked By:	
		CW	
		Date:	
		06.07.12	

A black and white photograph of a harbor scene. In the foreground, several men in dark uniforms and hats stand on a stone pier, looking towards the water. A large white sailboat is docked at the pier, with its mast and rigging visible. In the background, other ships are visible in the harbor, and a distant shoreline with hills is visible under a cloudy sky.

Picture 1: Early view towards Outer Berth, showing junction between smooth slabs and setts



Picture 2: View towards Hugh Town showing setts nearest 'open' side of quay and smoother slabs in vehicle way.



Picture 3: Storm damage (c1910)



Picture 4: View towards Harbourside Building showing setts nearest 'open' side of quay (with inset railway tracks?).

APPENDIX C – Existing Condition Photographs



Existing view of quay surfacing looking north. Granite flagstones are to the left (west), granite setts are to the right (east), separated by a line of pedestrian bollards.



Detail photographs showing the setts against the flags (note pedestrian using vehicle way rather than rougher setts...)

