

King, Andrew

Subject: Planning Application Representation; P/15/060

From: alan

Sent: 16 August 2015 10:15

To: Planning

Cc: davidjackson@islandspartnership.co.uk; Dryden, Craig

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Dear Sirs,

We wish to make representation on Planning Application P/15/060. Tregarthen's Hotel. Having reviewed the presented documentation we have a number of concerns, not only about the documentation presented, but the intention of the Applicant and how his alleged plan for the hotel is in accordance with the draft Scilly Economic Plan.

1. Dealing with the Application and Item 15, Trees & Hedges.
 - a. The application says that there are no trees and hedges affected on the proposed development site. This is clearly untrue as the photograph below illustrates. In the past weeks, hotel staff have "trimmed" the hedges and trees and left the debris for many days. This is unsightly and not what hotel guests would expect to see from their vantage points. It is unclear why professional tree surgeons had not been used for this work. If this is an example of the manner in which the applicant will handle the project, it is a cause of concern.

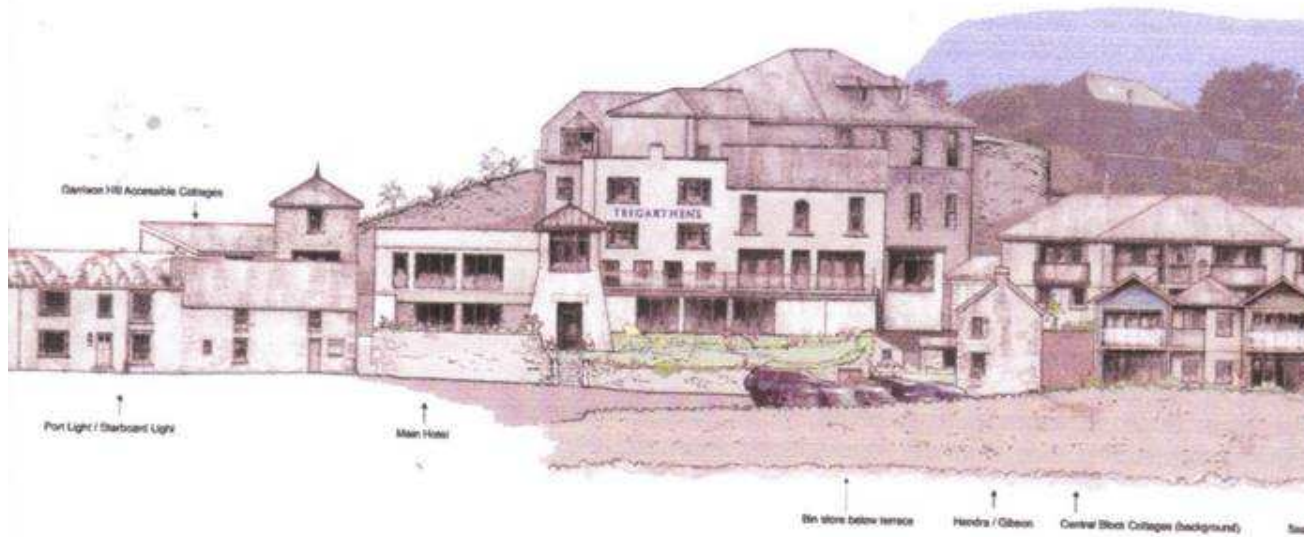


b.

c. The proposal eliminates all of the garden areas on the site, except for the small area to the east by Starboard Light. Given there is no exterior seating nearby, it is unclear where guests are expected to enjoy the surroundings of the hotel. In other words, open ground is to be replaced by dense building. The proposal says that *“The external areas, gardens and terraces will be re-landscaped, planted and enhanced”*. There will be little or no external garden area left, so the reality is inconsistent with the proposal.

2. The plans have been prepared by a firm of chartered surveyors and not by qualified architects. The views presented on the plans are not correct or consistent with other the plans and in particular, its presentation is misleading of heights and angles. It shows buildings, that in reality are obscured by other nearby buildings. The angles and faces of the buildings in this view are inaccurate. They show views from the hotel which in practice, will not be available, as they will be obscured by a higher roof line than that of the existing staff block. Is this an attempt to mislead or lack of skill by the surveyor?

Dormer windows in the original hotel are shown in the proposal, but they do not seem to have any relevance to floor plans and whether this is additional accommodation?



North Elevation Composite



3. Building costs on Scilly are considerably higher than the mainland. The designs offered seem to be uneconomical in terms of construction cost. The project is complex and is scheduled over a number of years and it is unclear what is to be tackled first, the hotel or the new buildings. If the applicant runs out of funds before the project is completed, it is possible the site could be more of an eyesore than it is at present. The timing of each section needs to be part of any consent. There is a noise and nuisance element of the works for neighbours for the proposed 5 year construction period. Tourists would again see more prominent building works on Scilly. This could become an unwelcome feature of Scilly. Building works should, for the sake of the tourist economy and residents, be completed within the shortest possible timeframe.
4. Whilst the applicant has indicated that this project is his personal vision, the applicant is Managing Director of Frobisher Ltd, who can be found at www.frobisherltd.com. This Hampshire based company specialises in identifying the development potential of underused land and buildings, spending on upgrade and selling on/letting as part of their property portfolio. They have no experience in the hospitality industry, as their case studies on the website indicate. They have no experience in particular in the running of a hotel. It appears that, what they have identified in Tregarthen's Hotel, is underused prime location land (garden) and poor quality staff accommodation, which would convert to apartment blocks. Allegedly this is for the holiday trade, but in time, will permission be sought for the separate independent units to be sold off, either for occupation or timeshare? It has already been indicated in a radio interview with the applicant that he is seeking year round occupation (*Radio Scilly August 13, 2015*).
5. Already at this early stage, the alteration of the original hotel has been partly shelved. Is it the intention in due course to split off the new development from the Hotel and sell on the hotel to an experienced hotel operator? In an interview with Radio Scilly on April 20, 2015 it was reported, "*Nigel (the applicant) is going against the trend, saying he has no intention to add self-catering accommodation to the hotel. He doesn't think the structure of Tregarthen's suits that.*" Now, it appears this is not the case.
6. The total number of people to be "accommodated" on the Tregarthen's site is not entirely clear.
The proposed restaurant seating is 95 compared with the existing 100.
The hotel has 33 bedrooms i.e. 64 bed spaces).
The new buildings have 10 bedrooms i.e. 24 bed spaces.
 - a. There is the loss of some of the 15 staff accommodation bed spaces, but it is proposed increasing staffing levels from 25 to 48.
 - b. What impact will this have on the water and sewage system at the hotel and elsewhere?
7. The draft Scilly Economic Plan is to call for more knowledge based jobs on the islands rather than low paid waiting/bar staff. This will go against the Plan. With removal of on-site accommodation, where are the 40+ transient workers going to be

accommodated? Other establishments are advertising for this category of staff, who this year are in short supply.

8. It is understood that the draft Economic Plan is evaluating what the housing balance should be, as this affects infrastructure planning and services. This development is significant and requires consideration, as to whether the expansion can be accommodated and whether it is appropriate to locate another 10 housing units (24 bed spaces) at this site.
9. The Seawall block is planned to be built extremely close to the sea wall. In spring/autumn storms, it is not unusual for the sea to overtop at this point (*in fact the wall was damaged last year and has been reinstated/repointed*). As the residents of the Mermaid Inn and adjacent granite houses can testify, the sea is very powerful. A timber frame and render building is unlikely to endure and inevitably the Fire and Rescue Service will at some time be needed to effect rescue/ securing of the buildings. This may put lives at risk and also could affect the sewage system. The new units in both new blocks have chimneys which are probably unnecessary, as each unit is proposed as having its own ground source heat pump. Is this artistic licence or again to confuse?
10. The dream of opening for longer in the season is a dream that to date has eluded the other island hoteliers. Experience would suggest that there is only economic room for one hotel in the winter. Hence, the claims made in the proposal are suspect and wishful rather than a reality. This view questions the applicant's understanding of the islands' tourist economy.
11. The rubbish proposal provision is less than exists at present and doubts must be cast as to whether clear thinking has been deployed, as more waste will be created by the site population. This also raises the question of access for the increased delivery of food and services required and additional traffic on the already congested adjacent car park.
12. Due to the poor quality of the plans it is difficult to be certain what vista and privacy are to be jeopardised. As a key location, this should surely be fully investigated. There is uncertainty about roof lines compared with the Garrison Wall (*this has not been shown*). The much photographed iconic view through the Garrison Arch and the effect of the new "twin towers" proposal needs to be resolved. Greater attention should be paid to the proposal's effect on neighbours' vistas, noise pollution and their privacy.

Conclusion

In conclusion the proposal is confused and careless, in that it does not present a real picture of the proposed built environment. It is so complex that a model of the proposed development would make for a better understanding of the finished reality, including showing to the same scale the Garrison Wall and seawall. The closeness of the buildings to the Garrison Wall is key, as any effect on the foundations would be catastrophic. The proposal does not provide adequate information on the water, sewage, traffic flow, laundry, food supplies and refuse disposal systems and whether the increases can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure.

It is the view that the proposal should be rejected on the principal basis that this land is not available for building. The information provided has not considered the visual impact of the development and the proposed building's physical security, so close to the water's edge. It not clear how the running of the hotel fits into the existing holiday trade structure, the effect on Scilly's infrastructure services and its overall place within the Economic Plan for the islands.

The applicant is to be congratulated on his vision of seeking to develop Tregarthen's Garden prime location land for housing, but doubts must be cast as to whether the proposal enhances the Scilly tourist industry with the removal of a waterside green space, or the proposal is purely for the financial benefits arising from the development of the land.

Kind regards

Alan & Glen Davis

Gunners Well

The Garrison

St Mary's

Isles of Scilly

TR21 0LS