

Melvyn & Linda Roberts
Eastbank, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR21 ONE

Chief Planning Officer
 Council of the Isles of Scilly

16 February 2016

Re: Planning Application P/16/003/FUL

RECEIVED BY THE
 PLANNING DEPARTMENT

17 FEB 2016

Dear Ms Walton

We refer to the recently received notification of the above planning application to rebuild the bungalow known as Sunholme, Porthloo. We do have some serious issues with regard to the proposed external appearance of the building which are as follows:-

1. Ref: Local Plan - Design Guide for Scilly (p92)

The above document makes the statement that a design with a flat roof would not be considered appropriate for Scilly.

We are concerned that the incorporation of a flat roof into the design in order to provide an upper floor will create a property that is out of keeping with all other properties in the area and we believe it is incorrect in the applicants Design & Access Statement to claim that "*this house does make a statement of restrained contemporary design because the immediate environs do not provide any reference points for the designer to latch onto*". The commonest design features in Porthloo, and indeed in the whole of Scilly, is the pitched roof and the use of dormer windows. The most recent rebuild in our vicinity at Harry's Walls has achieved a traditionally styled home but with a modern feel without resorting to an ultra contemporary exterior.

2. Ref: Local Plan - Policy 1-Environmental Protection (Section 20 (a))

States that future development proposals will only be permitted where they...

Conserve or enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and protect the unspoilt character and good appearance of the Heritage Coast.

3. Ref: Local Plan - Policy 2-Sustainability (Section 24)

Planning decisions must ensure that new development is in character with the islands.

New development should therefore positively reinforce the special and distinct qualities of the islands' environment, in accordance with the Isles of Scilly Design Guide. In order to achieve this objective and reflect the contents of the Design Guide, the design of a proposal should be based on a thorough and caring understanding of its place and context.

As 85% of Scilly's economy is derived from its visitors and our main attraction for them is the 'unique' and special' appearance of the islands, we suspect that modernist style buildings more akin to mainland coastal development are likely to have a negative impact on the visitor experience. Scilly's Heritage Coast needs sensitive development in order to retain and increase our visitor appeal.

Whilst the Local Plan is in the process of being rewritten we would be very surprised if local opinion will change significantly in this respect.

Contd. overleaf

4. Ref: Applicants' Design & Access Statement - 3 Design Solution

(a) *'this structure would not be obtrusive, but appear to be elegant'*. When viewed from the far side of the harbour Sunholme's dark non reflective roof is currently quite unobtrusive but we think that replacing it with a large rectangular expanse of glass will make it much more visible and on bright days will create a mirror-like effect on this part of the heritage coast. Its rather stark and dominant appearance will be even more apparent to those living near to it or those visitors and locals who will see it quite clearly from the lane, the coastal path and the public amenity area of the adjacent beach at Thomas Porth, a much used and valued facility.

(b) *Other fine examples of good quality contemporary architecture exists elsewhere on Scilly, and Tresco in particular.* We would say quite the opposite, in that Tresco Estate is to be commended in having retained a "cottage" style exterior appearance in keeping with the existing buildings on that island whilst being contemporary in all other respects. Similarly recent new builds on all of the other off islands have managed to achieve that balance.

(c) *the materials for the existing walls are under consideration, but could either be render or timber clad.* Looking at the property from the south and east, as we mostly will, and particularly if completely timber clad (as the applicants have inferred to us) it may unfortunately have the appearance not of a house but of a large wooden barn. A combination of white render and timber would perhaps help to relieve that appearance.

Ref: Site Plan

On a practical note the position of the septic tank is incorrect on the revised site plan that has recently been submitted. It is shown in the plot of land owned by us on the opposite side of the lane from Sunholme whereas it is actually situated in our plot of land to the south of Sunholme i.e. between our driveway and Sunholme's boundary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn and Linda Roberts