INDIGO

TREGARTHEN'S HOTEL
HUGH TOWN, ISLES OF SCILLY

APPENDIX 1
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

For

TREGARTHEN'S HOTEL

May 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Visual effects are the effects on people (visual receptors) from changes in the character of available views resulting from development; and the changes in the visual amenity[1] of the visual receptors.

The process of visual effect assessment is therefore concerned with assessing how the surroundings of individuals (or groups of people) may be specifically affected by changes in the context and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and / or introduction of new elements.

This document forms an Appendix to the Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared for the partial redevelopment of Tregarthen's Hotel, Hugh Town, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly on behalf of Tregarthen's Hotel Ltd.

It contains the detailed methodology applicable to the visual effect assessment undertaken for the project and should be read in conjunction with main LVIA and the assessments contained within Appendix 4.

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT

The methodology set out below is based on the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) prepared jointly by the landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and published on the 17th April 2013. This publication contains the latest guidance on the subject of visual effect assessment, and is widely acknowledged to represent the 'industry standard' on the subject.

In addition, all photos have been taken and presented in accordance with Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 "Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and visual Impact Assessment."

[1] Visual amenity means the overall pleasantness of the views that receptors enjoy of their surroundings (GLVIA Paragraph 2.20).

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VISUAL EFFECT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The process of visual effect assessment is typically divided into the following stages:

- **Determining the Study Area.**
- **Selecting viewpoints to be assessed and agreeing the scope of the assessment with the competent authority.**
- **Establishing a detailed baseline for each viewpoint selected.**
- **Presentation of photographs.**
- **The process of visual effect assessment.**

1.2 The details of each of these are set out below.

2. DATA SOURCES

2.1 Data sources used in the preparation of the visual assessment are listed in Section 10 at the back of the main Landscape and Visual Appraisal document. Sources include Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photography, and interactive websites.

3. DETERMINING THE STUDY AREA OF THE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 For the purposes of this Appraisal, the first stage of visual effect assessment involves the identification of a preliminary Study Area and subsequent mapping of the visibility of the Development Proposals through a combination of desk study and fieldwork.

3.2 The Study Area identified has also been used to establish the landscape baseline (refer to Appendix 2).

Desk study

3.3 The potential extent of visibility of the development proposals is first established by identifying possible viewpoints through a desktop study of Ordnance Survey maps; web based mapping tools; and aerial photography.

3.4 This review takes into consideration the likely screening effects of topography and significant areas of vegetation, but is broad scale and requires refinement.

Fieldwork

3.5 Having undertaken the desktop study the preliminary Study Area is checked and revised through extensive on-site fieldwork.

3.6 On completion of the fieldwork, a Study Area is established and a reasonable degree of accuracy can be obtained. The Study Area takes into account the areas of the surrounding landscape / townscape from where development of the nature described in the development proposals section of the LVA (Section 6) may be seen either from ground level or from within buildings.

4. IDENTIFYING THE NATURE OF THE VISUAL RECEPTORS

4.1 Having established the Study Area, the people (visual receptors) using the various areas within this zone are identified.

4.2 People have differing responses to changes to views and visual amenity depending on both the context and their purpose for being in a particular place. They are therefore identified according to their activity and location.

4.3 Receptors from public viewpoints (land and buildings with public access) may include:

People passing through the area on transport routes. ▪ Arterial routes (motor ways / dual carriageways / trunk roads). ▪ Major roads (A roads). ▪ Minor roads (A, B and C class roads). ▪ Railways (excluding scenic routes). ▪ Waterways used for transport. ▪ Cycle routes used primarily for commuting.	People using facilities / undertaking activities specifically associated with experience and enjoyment of the landscape. ▪ Use of Public Rights of Way (Footpaths / bridleways / by-ways Cycle routes (rural) / rural lanes). ▪ Scenic routes (National Trail / Long Distance Route). ▪ Open access / Common land. ▪ Acknowledged viewpoints. ▪ Tourist facilities. ▪ Canals and rivers used for recreation.
People visiting promoted landscapes or attractions. ▪ National Parks. ▪ AONB. ▪ Scenic railways.	People engaged in recreation activities of different types. ▪ Formal sorts such as football / rugby etc. ▪ Golf. ▪ Horse riding.
People located in the setting of a heritage asset.[2] ▪ National Trust properties.	People living and working in the area. ▪ Roads / Pavements used by locals and for commuting.

▪ Registered Parks and Gardens. ▪ Conservation Areas. ▪ Listed Buildings.	▪ People using local facilities (eg station, supermarket or public library).

4.4 Receptors from private viewpoints (land and buildings with no public access) may include:

People living in the area (houses / flats and private gardens).	People working in commercial / industrial premises.
(**Note:** In large parts of the Study Area there will be no public access and very few people will experience visual effects created by the proposed development. The effects on receptors in these locations are not normally assessed).	

5. SELECTING VIEWPOINTS

5.1 Following the fieldwork; establishment of the Study Area; and identification of the visual receptors in each area, a number of viewpoints from locations within the public domain[3] are selected for assessment of the visual effects.

5.2 In the case of these proposals, however, viewpoints from private residences within the private domain have also been selected. Properties have been grouped so that those where the effects will be similar are assessed together. These assessments are based on views from publicly accessible locations close to properties and from views looking out from the Site, however, it should be noted that no access has been gained to these residences.

5.3 Viewpoints selected can be:

1. **Representative viewpoints**: Chosen to represent the effects experienced from a number of viewpoints which cannot all be included individually, and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ (for example a viewpoint chosen to represent views along a particular footpath).
2. **Specific viewpoints**: Chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within a landscape, or to assess views from specific private residences.
3. **Illustrative viewpoints**: Chosen to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issue (which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations; or the effect of distance).

5.4 Selection takes account of a range of factors including accessibility; sensitivity and potential numbers of receptors who may be affected; viewing distance, direction and elevation; the nature of the viewing experience (static,

[3] Planning is primarily concerned with effects on the public domain.

sequential); the type of view (glimpse, vista, panorama); and the potential for cumulative views in conjunction with other developments.

5.5 Viewpoints are chosen to:

1. Cover as wide a range of situations as possible (from locations both near to the site and more distant).
2. Cover important sequential views along key routes.
3. Cover the full range of different visual receptors who may be affected.
4. Demonstrate the influence of distance.
5. Demonstrate the effects on any specific landmarks.
6. Be as typical as possible of views likely to be experienced in each location.

5.6 The emphasis here is on proportionality in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposal and its likely 'Significant'[4] effects.

6. DETERMINING THE SCOPE

6.1 Having determined the Study Area; established the nature of visual receptors; and considered appropriate viewpoints for assessment the scope of the visual assessment can then be determined.

6.2 Elements considered in this exercise include:

- The extent of the Study Area (based on the survey work undertaken).
- The location of viewpoints to be examined in detail.
- The duration of the assessments (short, medium and long term).
- The requirement for seasonal assessments (summer and winter).
- The eye level for assessments undertaken (generally 1.6m).
- The requirement for assessments from private residences / land.
- The requirement for assessments during an enabling works demolition phase; the construction phase; and during a potential future decommissioning phase.
- The requirement for assessments at night.
- The requirement for cumulative assessments.
- The requirement for future monitoring.

6.3 GLVIA3 places an emphasis on determining a reasonable approach (proportional to the scale and nature of the development proposed). It is, therefore, normal to "scope out" those potential impacts which are felt to be unnecessary or unreasonable (given the nature of the proposals in question).

[4] Refer to paragraphs 9.20 – 9.22 below for definition of 'Significant'.

6.4 Details of the scoping exercise and limitations carried out for this Appraisal are contained within Sections 2 & 3 of the main Landscape Visual Appraisal to which this methodology forms an Appendix.

7. ESTABLISHING THE BASELINE FOR EACH VIEWPOINT TO BE ASSESSED

7.1 Having established the scope of the assessment the visual baseline is recorded for each viewpoint selected.[5]

7.2 For each viewpoint selected a photographic record is presented (refer to Appendix 6) and details of the location, nature of the existing view, and nature of receptors, are recorded in tabular form in Appendix 4:

- Viewpoint locations are accurately mapped and the approximate direction of the view; approximate elevation; approximate horizontal view angle covered by the photograph presented; approximate distance to the closest edge of site; landscape designations at the viewpoint; and any other comments are recorded (the intention being that sufficient information is provided to allow any person to return to the location and record the same view).
- The nature of the existing view is recorded in detail including a description of the scene: the extent of the site visible; the angle of view in relation to main activity of the receptor; the relative amount of time view will be experienced; the type of view (glimpse to open vista); whether it is one of a sequence (for example along a footpath); whether the view is from a specific viewpoint where parking, benches, sign boards or interpretative material are provided; whether the view appears in art, literature, guidebooks, on tourist maps etc.; and the viewpoint type (representative, specific or illustrative).
- The nature of receptors is then recorded in detail including the focus of receptors; activity of receptors; whether the receptors are stationary or transient (so see the view only for a short time); and an estimate of the approximate / relative numbers of people at each viewpoint is also made.[6]

7.3 The Sensitivity of visual receptors is also recorded in these tables (although this forms part of the assessment process set out below).

[5] The visual baseline is constantly updated throughout the preparation of the visual effects assessment, thereby ensuring changes to the baseline landscape are reflected in the assessments presented.

[6] As no firm data on the exact numbers of people using footpaths / roads etc is available, this is made in the form of a relative judgement (high / medium / low etc.), however, it should be recognised that the number of people at any viewpoint does not affect the sensitivity of an individual receptor or the magnitude of effect from a viewpoint. The relative numbers of people at each viewpoint may simply be referred to, therefore, in concluding the overall visual assessment.

8. PRESENTATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

8.1 Assessment photographs are presented in Appendix 6. These were taken with a Canon 1000D digital SLR camera with a focal length set to 31mm and a multiplication factor of 1.6 to give the equivalent of 50mm on a 35mm film SLR. They replicate normal eye level viewed at 1.6 metres above ground level and are presented in the appendix with viewing distances stated; all in accordance with Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11.

9. THE PROCESS OF VISUAL ASSESSMENT

9.1 Recording of the visual baseline is followed by a systematic identification of likely effects on potential visual receptors at each viewpoint.[7]

9.2 The process involves considering the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of impact and making an assessment of the significance of effect.

Sensitivity of visual receptors x Magnitude of effect = Significance of effect

Determining the sensitivity of visual receptors

9.3 The first stage of the assessment process involves determining the sensitivity of the visual receptors.

9.4 Visual receptors at each viewpoint selected for assessment are identified and evaluated (using table A below) according to:

- Their susceptibility to change in a view and visual amenity.
- The value attached to each particular view.

9.5 Susceptibility is a function of the occupation / activity of the receptor at that particular location and, as a consequence, the extent to which their attention / interest may therefore be focused on the view and the visual amenity they experience.

9.6 Value takes account of value attached to views in relation to heritage assets; planning designations; and value attached to views by visitors (often indicated by reference to views in art[8] / literature[9] / in guidebooks / on tourist maps / and by the provision of facilities for the enjoyment of the views (such as sign boards / interpretative materials / parking areas and benches)).

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[7] This is constantly updated throughout the preparation of the proposals / the visual effects assessment, thereby ensuring modifications to the design are reflected in the assessments presented.

[8] For example Constable's view of Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Ground.

[9] For example references to Stonehenge in Thomas Hardy's writings; or to views of Top Withens (the Wuthering Heights farmhouse) in Emily Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights'.

Table A – Susceptibility and Value

	Susceptibility	Value
High	Viewers whose focus is primarily on the landscape setting: • Viewers using designated Public Rights of Way (Roads / Footpaths / Bridleways / Restricted Byways / Byways open to all traffic (BOAT's)); Access Land; or railways for the enjoyment of the countryside / townscape. • Viewers within gardens and living areas of residential properties (rooms normally occupied during waking / daylight hours).	• Viewers within landscapes designated for the preservation of the beauty of the countryside (National Parks, AONB's, AGLV). • Viewers within Conservation Areas. • Viewers from the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or Listed Building. • Nationally famous viewpoints referenced in art or literature. • Locally well-known viewpoints shown on Ordnance Survey maps – which may also be referenced in guidebooks / on tourist maps. Facilities may be provided for the enjoyment of the view (such as sign boards / interpretative materials).
Medium	Viewers whose focus is not primarily on the landscape setting, but who may value the setting as part of the activity in which they are involved: • People engaged in outdoor recreational sports. • Viewers using roads for local access. • Viewers accessing residential properties. • Viewers using Public Rights of Way and other areas with public access other than for specific enjoyment of the countryside / townscape. • Recreational area user groups. • Viewers within sleeping areas of residential properties.	• Viewers within landscapes of moderate or good strength of character as identified in local Landscape Character Assessments. • Viewers within residential areas. • Viewpoints where limited facilities may be provided for the enjoyment of the view (such as / parking areas / benches), but no references on Ordnance Survey maps.
Low	Viewers whose focus is primarily on the activity in which they are involved and not on the landscape setting and / or whose view may be transitory: • Viewers travelling through an area on trains or in vehicles on major roads. • Viewers working in commercial premises. • Viewers working in and around industrial premises • People engaged in formal sports.	• Viewers within landscapes identified as of limited strength of character in local Landscape Character Assessments. • No national or townscape designations. • No specific references to the location in art / literature / guidebooks / tourist maps. • No facilities provided. • Views dominated by negative elements in the scene or negative experiential aspects of the viewpoint (for example a viewpoint dominated by a noisy road).

9.7 When there are visual receptors of differing susceptibility to change to consider in one particular location, the estimated frequency of use by each receptor will normally be used to determine the overall susceptibility of receptors from that location. For instance, when local roads are frequently

used by walkers as part of a popular walk or a National Trail the high susceptibility receptor (viewers using designated Public Rights of Way for the enjoyment of the countryside) will take precedence. However, when local roads are only used by occasional walkers then the medium sensitivity receptor (viewers using roads for local access) will take precedence. Only in specific situations will both be assessed.

9.8 To reach an assessment of the **sensitivity** of each receptor, 'Susceptibility' and 'Value' are then combined using table B below. For example, a receptor playing a football match (low susceptibility) in a National Park (high value) would have a medium level of sensitivity.

Table B Sensitivity of receptors

		Value		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Susceptibility	**High**	High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity
	Medium	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
	Low	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity	Low sensitivity

Determining the need for detailed reporting

9.9 Having determined the Sensitivity of receptors, the 'potential for **Moderate** or more **Significant** effects' is assessed[10]. This is recorded in the tables as "None" or "Some"; and reasons for exclusion or inclusion are given. However, for this study, visual receptors are carried forward to detailed reporting irrespective of the potential significance of effects ie even if the likely significance of potential effects is assessed as "None".

9.10 For all representative viewpoints therefore, the magnitude of effects is established.

Determining the magnitude of visual effect

9.11 The magnitude of a visual effect considers the degree to which changes in views and visual amenity will occur as a result of the Proposed Development. Change may arise from built form, engineered forms and /or from soft landscape elements of the development.

9.12 Each of the visual effects identified is evaluated in terms of its size / scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, the duration and reversibility, and the type of effect.

9.13 For each viewpoint and assessment period chosen, consideration is given to:

The nature of the view

- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.
- The angle of the view in relation to the receptor: oblique / straight on;
- The nature of the view: panoramic, open vista, filtered, glimpse;

[10] It is worth noting here that GLVIA 3 recommends that only those effects with the potential for "Significant" effects should be carried forward to detailed reporting (GLVIA page 111), however, in this assessment to be more rigorous any impact with the potential for 'Moderate or more significant effects' has been carried forward.

- Whether the view is stationary or transient[11] or one of a sequence of views.

Reversibility

- Whether the change is temporary or permanent;
- Whether the effect is reversible or irreversible;
- Whether the change is avoidable or unavoidable.

The nature of the visual effect

- The proportion of the development visible.
- Degree of change in the view (the extent of the view over which changes would be evident) / the proportion of the view occupied by the development.
- Extent of change in composition of the view (eg change from field to built development).
- Whether the development is the focus of view due to proximity / scale.
- Features lost from the view, and their extent.
- New features – both man-made objects and vegetation with particular features noted – (Is there a new visual focus in the view).
- Change in visual scale.
- Change in the degree of visual enclosure.
- Change to the skyline.
- Change in the simplicity/complexity of the view.
- The degree of contrast / integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with existing / remaining landscape elements / characteristics in terms of form, scale / mass, line, height, colour, texture.
- The effectiveness of mitigating measures.

The type of effect

- Adverse, beneficial or neutral.

9.14 Magnitude of effects are then determined using the guidance in table C below. Considering the magnitude of effect involves careful consideration of the complex interrelationships between the differing elements set out above. An informed professional judgement is made on these relationships and whether visual effects are positive or negative (or neutral) and their consequences for views and visual amenity. This is based on a judgement about whether the changes will affect the quality of the visual experience for those groups of people who will see the changes, given the nature of the existing views.

[11] Oxford English dictionary definition of transient is "lasting only for a short time"

Table C – Magnitude of visual effects

Magnitude of effect	Guidance for assessing magnitude of visual effects
High adverse	The development proposals will be the principal feature within the scene: • Having a substantial effect on the character of the scene.
Medium adverse	Where the development proposals will form an immediately apparent part of the scene: • Having a considerable effect on the character of the scene.
Low adverse	Where the development proposals form a visible element in the scene: • Having an appreciable effect on the character of the scene.
Negligible Adverse	Where the development proposals will form a minor element in the scene: • Having a minor effect on the character of the scene.
No change	Where the development proposals will, on balance, have little effect on the scene and are neither adverse or beneficial: • The development cannot be seen or • The development will be scarcely appreciated in the overall view, and/or • The view may have changed but the overall effect is no worse or better than the existing.
Negligible beneficial	Where the development proposals will be individually appreciated in the overall view and cause a minimal improvement: • On balance, enhancing the overall scene.
Low beneficial	Where the development proposals will be individually appreciated in the overall view and cause a slight improvement: • Appreciably enhancing the overall scene.
Medium beneficial	Where the development proposals will be individually appreciated in the overall view and cause a moderate improvement: • Considerably enhancing the overall scene
High beneficial	Where the development proposals will be individually appreciated in the overall view and cause a major improvement: • Sense of place restored.

Visual effect significance

9.15 The overall **visual effect significance** is then determined by combining the sensitivity of the individual receptors and the magnitude of visual effect. These are defined in Table D.

Table D – Visual effect significance matrix

		Sensitivity of visual receptors		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Magnitude of effect	**High adverse**	Substantial adverse effect	Major adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect
	Medium adverse	Major adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect
	Low adverse	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect
	Negligible adverse	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect	Negligible adverse effect
	No change	Neutral effect	Neutral effect	Neutral effect
	Negligible beneficial	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect	Negligible beneficial effect
	Low beneficial	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect
	Medium beneficial	Major beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect
	High beneficial	Substantial beneficial effect	Major beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect

The use of photomontage

9.16 No photomontages have been used in the assessments undertaken; however, working models developed in Sketchup have been used as part of the assessment process (not presented).

EIA regulations, Planning and "Significant" visual effects

9.17 As set down in GLVIA3 (and as required under EIA legislation) the aim of assessment is to determine any "Significant" visual effects.

9.18 "Significant" effects vary from project to project and are appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development. In this case, as for the landscape assessment, in terms of the EIA Regulations and for the purposes of planning, only 'major' and 'substantial' adverse effects are considered "Significant".

9.19 However, for the purposes of this Appraisal, those viewpoints where the effects are not considered to be "Significant" are considered in the main LVA and are not disregarded. Whilst EIA regulations only require the "Significant" effects to be identified (both adverse and beneficial) it is clearly important, in considering the overall visual effects of a development, to consider not only those receptors experiencing "Significant" effects, but those with lesser effects as well. In concluding the overall impact of a development it is important that the focus does not become purely on a single or limited number of "Significant" effects, when the bigger picture may be one of generally minimal effects (and may include beneficial as well as adverse effects).