

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
PROPOSED RE-BUILDING OF HOUSE
AT
SUNHOLME, PORTHLOO, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY, TR21 0NE

22ND JANUARY (Revised)

1. INTRODUCTION:

Sunholme was built as a single storey (bungalow) around the late 1920's and early 1930's. It is a rendered building of no particular architectural merit, and does not have any significant design features that can be considered to contribute to the overall environs of Porthloo. Having said that, there are no architecturally significant buildings near to the site that would play a part in deciding the design philosophy of the re-building of the house.

The house was designed to have 3 bedrooms all on the ground floor. Sleeping situated on the North side of the house, with living and eating on the South side. A simple plan shape. Sunholme is raised up on the seaward elevation such that there is a platform that forms an access point to the front entrance. It is believed that water tanks are located under this platform, and will form useful proposals for rainwater harvesting. Surrounding land within the ownership of the applicants is banked on three sides of the house, making any garden small, but natural.

In particular, the South wall has significant cracks that will need attention. Further exploratory work needs to be carried out by the appointed structural engineer to establish the nature of any works required.

2. BRIEF:

The applicants purchased Sunholme in 2015 with a view to create a home which would be designed for 21st century living, maximizing the views from this magnificent site in Porthloo, overlooking St Mary's harbour. Although the original house provided accommodation for living, eating, a bathroom and three bedrooms, the house had not been modernized for many a year, and certainly not equipped for 21st century living. The brief specified three bedrooms, the same as before, but with the added convenience of en-suite bathrooms for at least two of the bedrooms, and a family bathroom. Plenty of storage, something lacking in the current house, and living space that made the best of the location and wonderful views. The applicants were also keen to create a house which used traditional Isles of Scilly materials, as listed in the Isles of Scilly Design Guide (IoSDG), but in a contemporary way. The spaces can be organized to create open plan living, and where

possible, the experience of 3 dimensional areas created by opening up and exposing structural voids. The house must be sustainable and be insulated to at least current building regulations, have an energy efficient heating system and the possibility of rainwater harvesting and other forms of sustainable solutions.

The house must also respect the current curtilage of Sunholme, and if possible re-use as many existing walls as possible (subject to a structural engineers report). That also applies to other materials that should be re-used where possible. There must be no uPVC proposed in the design, not only recommended in the IoSDG, but also recognized as not sustainable, having with a short life span, and totally the wrong material to create well proportioned fenestration.

3. DESIGN PROCESS:

Despite a recommendation for approval by the planning officers, and subsequently refusal, the applicant decided not to go to appeal on the decision, and embark upon a re-design which would reflect some of the comments received both from neighbours and councilors. The basic plan form has been retained, but whilst the overall detailing of the house is contemporary, the concept retains many visual links to traditional Isles of Scilly design influences. Also, since the previous application, there has been much discussion with the Duchy of Cornwall about the design leading to their approval for the scheme as presented here in this application. Early on in the design development stage of the scheme, it became clear that all the accommodation required would not fit on the ground floor; there would have to be a second storey. This concept has remained throughout the process of design development, and is very much part of this new design. The applicant have also continued to make it clear that they want to make the best of this wonderful location, the views and the opportunity to enjoy an external terrace on the first floor.

The constraints for the design are quite clear. The overall footprint and position of the existing external walls are sacrosanct. The previous scheme included a flat roof as a major part of the design, but it was made clear to the applicant that councilors and neighbours wanted to see a more traditional pitched roof. This has been achieved using a 30 degree pitched roof, and the result is only 70cms higher than the existing roof. This roof is designed to be covered in slate, but the roof only covers part of the house therefore creating a terrace at first floor, as per the previous scheme. Another link to the past is by incorporating parapet gable walls, which link in with the front elevation and terrace front, all capped in slate. The front wall to the first floor extension is also finished in slate tiles to create a seamless and less obtrusive elevation.

The amount of glass has been reduced considerably, and the design of the dormer doors / windows on the first floor have a unique detail, which also feature slate. A three-dimensional sketch explaining this detail is part of this application. A very finely engineered 25mm slate roof and side cheeks are the main part of this design, but with cantilevered overhangs, which provide a unique contemporary detail. This same detail is carried through to the main entrance front door and canopy, as well as the tops to the chimney stacks either side of the elevation. Two chimneys have been incorporated in the scheme to provide balance and symmetry.

All windows and doors are to be fabricated in aluminium, which is both durable and maintenance free. Upvc was never considered an option as they offer no scope for design in this context and neither are they durable. Timber was considered, but maintenance can be an issue.

Following discussion with the planning officers, it has been decided to finish the main walls of the house in render, probably white to align with the neighbouring houses. As has already been discussed, the rest of the house features a slate roof and front wall at first floor level, together with the slate detailing on the dormers, front porch and chimney tops.

This house does make a statement of restrained contemporary design. It meets the many parameters set by the Isles of Scilly Design Guide. It also meets the requirements of the applicants to create a fabulous house out of what is currently a very poor design contributing nothing to the environment at Porthloo.

The applicants would like to draw attention to the National Policy Framework (NPPF), which makes it clear that Councils should not attempt to prescriptively impose particular architectural styles or preferences when taking decisions.

4. ACCESS:

Access to the house via the rear entrance is available for people with mobility problems. Furthermore, another reason for having all the bedroom on the ground floor means that the house will be future proof in the event that the applicant requires ground floor accommodation due to mobility issues.