

18-068

Application for removal of condition 2 of planning permission P2365 (23 April 1985) relating to Flat 1 Spanish Ledge, The Parade, St Marys.

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PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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Background

Spanish Ledge comprises two adjoining three-storey houses, built of local granite, with later extensions.

The premises, originally residential houses and later operated as a guest house, was converted into holiday flats in the mid 1980's.

Planning permission P2365 imposed a condition (no.2) which stated 'that none of the proposed 9 flats shall be used for permanent accommodation without further planning permission.'

The reason for imposition of the condition was 'to be in accord with policy 6A of the structure plan (the Isles of Scilly Structure Plan was adopted in 1984 and covered the period 1981 to 1996)'. The structure plan in question has long since been superseded.

Subsequently condition 2 has been lifted from Flat 6 Spanish Ledge; a one bedroom property, by application P/14/037 (24 September 2014) and Flat 2 Spanish Ledge; a 4 bed property, by application P/16/059 (19th July 2016).

Justification

The previous Planning Officer's reports on the above mentioned planning applications, refers to the condition originally being imposed due to the critical nature of the water supply (imposing the condition pre dated the desalination plant).

The supporting text of policy 6, of the now superseded Structure Plan, discusses uncertainties relating to water supply-and-demand. The critical nature of the water supply, in particular, meant that any housing would further strain the already delicate balance between this supply-and-demand. This is now, as it was then, a relevant consideration.

The Planning Assessment also refers to Policy 6 stating that environmental constraints to new developments are considerable and that there are few opportunities to integrate new developments into Hugh Town and Old Town without further damaging inclusions into the landscape.

Flat 1 is in an existing building within Hugh Town, and therefore there will be no detrimental impact upon the wider landscape of the islands if the Flat were to be occupied on a permanent basis. There is no restriction at present which prevents year round occupancy by guests. Flat 1 can currently be used for holiday letting during holiday season and for seasonal workers wishing to remain during the winter months. Allowing permanent occupancy of Flat 1 would represent a sustainable form of development and provide some housing within Hugh Town without adding further strain on infrastructure, including water supply; the main reason for imposing the condition back in 1985.

The Planning Officer clearly felt that lifting the restriction to allow permanent occupation for the previous applicants was consistent with both the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (Framework revised 24th July 2018) and the Isles of Scilly Local Plan.

To conclude, allowing permanent occupation of Flat 1 would not be significantly different to its current occupation. There are currently 3 flats out of 9 at Spanish Ledge that can/are occupied on a permanent basis. One of which is leased by the Council of The Isles of Scilly on a long-term

arrangement and sub-let as emergency housing. There is a demand for local people who are unable to rent through the Duchy/Local Authority and who wish to make their own arrangements to secure long term housing.

The arguments in favour of lifting the restriction From Flats 6 and 2 are equally valid for Flat 1.