

LONGSTONE
Lodge & Cafe

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

SELF-CATERING UNITS

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The Process

Assessment

Longstone Lodge & Café has been established for 3 years (3 years for the Café and 2 years for the Lodge). This has given us an insight into the tourism sector on the Isles of Scilly and led us to believe that increasing the accommodation offer on St. Mary's would be beneficial for the industry.

Physical

Longstone is situated on the popular main Island of St. Mary's. It sits on an overall flat site of approximately three acres and occupies a very quiet, pleasant countryside location on high ground in the very centre of St. Mary's island. Surrounded by flower fields, with south facing aspect and sea views overlooking Porth Hellick cove and backing on to a pine tree plantation.

Less than one mile from the town centre of Hugh Town the Island airport and harbour, the The property is conveniently situated for the visitor trade just off the Telegraph Hill road and close to the main nature trail.

There are no overlooking properties, although there is sight from the rear land owned by Porth Hellick House. The only public direct sight is from the road near pumping station, however this is obscured in places by trees.

The site borders with a residential property, Longstone Bungalow, and Longstone Farm land.



During the winter of 2016/17 the site was landscaped and extensively developed to include a Summerhouse, Childrens outdoor play area, parking and produce growing area (see above photo dated September 2017).



The Café and Lodge reception and kitchen areas were renovated from the existing buildings and the accommodation was newly built, with the entirety open to the public on 1st May 2018 (Café open May 2017).

In 2016 there was a new bio-septic tank fitted to deal with the sewerage and majority of grey water, as well as two rainwater 1500 litre collection tanks. The latter of which service the Café WCs and grounds watering where available throughout the year, particularly in the drier months.

We also have a 7000 litre fresh water storage tank, which drip feeds from the water main, installed to ensure that there is no additional strain on the water provision in the area.

Social

As this facility has a history of being a tourist focussed business the impact on neighbours should be relatively minimal.

Adding further accommodation to the site should not affect neighbours adversely however guests will be made aware of the residential aspect and surrounding environment to ensure a peaceful outcome for all.

Prior to any building work the residents of Longstone Terrace and surrounding Farm will be informed to ensure the least inconvenience possible.

Economic

The Isles of Scilly is an extremely popular holiday destination during the summer season and some potential visitors are unable to visit due to a lack of accommodation availability or the high costs involved.

With more low-cost airlines to European and international destinations, some holidaymakers may opt for a trip abroad for a similar and sometimes cheaper price than visiting the islands.

We believe that by extending our business venture we could provide further affordable option for tourists. It would be most suitable for those visitors keen on walking and the countryside.

SELF-CATERING UNITS: The main aim of this project is to provide complementary accommodation to the existing hostel. It is clear from the occupations figures over the last two years of trading that accommodation for 2 persons has the highest demand. Therefore to increase options for this requirement we are looking to create further self-catering accommodation aimed at this demographic. This will be an extension of the hostel theme, using the existing communal areas such as reception, the washing & drying room and external gardens to create both collective experience and private space. This accommodation would be open all year round, using third party channels to encourage a wider range of visitors to the islands particularly in the cooler months.

Environmental

In preparation for this application a Bat Survey was conducted in partnership with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife trust to ensure that a protection of the species was undertaken if required. Although no nest sites were found the Wildlife Trust have suggested specific activities that should be undertaken to support the local environment and habitats. This advice we are keen to follow and will adhere to as suggested within their report; see Appendix 1.

Water provision is a concern in the Longstone area and was an important part of our initial building application and construction process. To ensure no additional pressure was placed on the current services significantly sized fresh water break tank was installed that 'drip feeds' from the mains supply. This has proved successful and is more than sufficient in size and capabilities to service the proposed additional accommodation.

To ensure energy usage is kept to a minimum we intend to install full LED lighting within the additional units, as well as low energy kitchen appliances and heating systems. Our current hot water tanks, supported by solar thermal energy provision, are sufficient in size to service the additional proposed units.

Planning Policy

The Isles of Scilly Local Plan: Policy 4 – Economic Development states the following objectives:

To promote employment and economic activity by providing opportunities for businesses to support viable communities. Proposals based on the existing economic base of tourism, agriculture and fishing, as well as the distinctiveness of the islands, will be supported in the following cases:

(a) where such development contributes to the further diversification and essential modernisation of the islands' economy; or

(b) where it demonstrably improves the quality of existing tourist accommodation, including that of managed camping sites, or potentially extends the length of the tourist season; or

(c) where there is a change of use for a larger hotel or guesthouse (in excess of six bed spaces) to another form of tourist accommodation, provided it retains a residential unit for permanent occupation and does not result in an imbalance of the type of accommodation available to visitors to the extent that it would harm the tourism status and character of the islands; or

(d) where development provides either a hostel or bunkhouse linked to environmentally or educationally based activities on each inhabited island; or

(e) where self-contained tourist accommodation is provided as part of an existing farm holding, up to a maximum of two such units of accommodation per holding and is necessarily related to the latter's continued viability and overall land management

Essentially we are offering to meet the criteria on four of the five criteria; a,b,c and d:

a) In creating 2 person self catering units, we are meeting the demand evaluated from our current business and by taking verbal advice from many seasoned accommodation providers on St. Mary's. With bedspaces reducing on the islands overall, we look forward to offering the opportunity to increase contemporary and affordable accommodation options for visitors.

(b) We aim to provide high quality self catering apartments that, through the use of online booking channels, are available to customers all year round.

(c/d) Longstone Lodge is a brand new accommodation concept for the islands, that of a hostel, and by increasing the options onsite, endeavours to push the boundaries of accommodation yet further, including private self catering to the business model.

Involvement

Who we have consulted with:

- Duchy of Cornwall

The Duchy of Cornwall have been an important influence on our aims and aspirations for this project. As the

landowners they have a strong steer on our proposals and we have taken much advice from them to ensure that they are content with our plans for this site.

- CIOS Planning Department

It was important to us to consult with the Council of the Isles of Scilly Planning Department at early stages of our ideas, and advice received throughout the process has been instrumental in our decision making process.

Evaluation

In essence we would like to be able to offer flexibility for the lower cost accommodation market on the Islands, however if we are limited to environmental and educational groups only we feel this is would not be inclusive for all, and most importantly unviable for us as a project.

Other constraints are understandably overall cost, however a well-managed construction phase and our own hard work and appreciation of available assistance (i.e. accountancy advice) should ensure a successful ongoing project.

Design

We would continue the décor employed in the café and hostel that compliments the natural land and seascape of the islands. Using rustic wood and natural colour schemes that have been so successful in the previous build, often receiving favourable comments.

Use

The aim is to embed self-catering seamlessly into the business, offering a whole range of attractive options for visitors. Drawing a broad range of ages and interests.

We will provide a clean and comfortable environment in which to stay, with a light and spacious feel. Other attractive facilities include well-equipped individual kitchens, generous bedroom sizes, modern decor and lounge/dining areas with sea views.



Services added in the previous build will also be of interest and for use by any new guests generated by the additional self-catering units. These include reception services (staff support and small onsite shop), children's facilities, such as play areas and equipment use/hire and also the onsite café which provides home-cooked fare and a licensed premises during the daytime.

As our visitors will be providing their own meals, residents would need to travel to Hugh Town (25 minutes walk) for the supermarket or use the available farm shops to source their evening meals, or alternatively access restaurants. The latter may require returning after dark. Taxis are available from external providers and we provide free electric points in the parking area for guest to charge electric buggies. However when considering accessibility, a small amount of low level additional external lighting would be included, installed types following the suggestions by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust (see Bat Survey), keeping light pollution to a minimum.

As we would be constructing a new space within the current building we will have the opportunity to continue our original aim, to include environmentally friendly technology, ensuring we provide an attractive experience for visitors whilst contributing to the protection of the local environment.

We will ensure that the additional spaces will be carbon efficient, employing high-grade insulation and low energy electrical outputs. We are also intending to take advantage of the recently installed solar energy which currently heats our water tanks, which are already sufficient in size to supply the additional self catering units proposed.

It is apparent that there is a high level of interest in dog friendly accommodation on St. Mary's and to take advantage of this demand we intend to allocate one of the proposed units as 'pet friendly'. We will inform those travelling with canine companions to hire any required equipment from the 'Vet Support Group' hence supporting a local charity in the process.

Amount

We are proposing to use the current empty roof space of the existing hostel buildings for this project.

The new units will be constructed internally to the existing building, with additional dormer windows at the front, and access dormers and walkways to the rear.

Fire safety is of primary importance and advice from Building Control and consultant Architects has been sought to endeavour to meet regulations and requirements.

By constructing four additional self-catering units, the additional residents onsite will only increase by eight persons, therefore added strain on facilities and services will be minimal.

Sewerage will be catered for easily in the newly installed septic system. As with water supply, this will be serviced by the existing water tanks employed to facilitate the café and hostel buildings. Electricity will also be covered by existing supply.

Waste will be managed through our current recycling practises and during the building phase a management plan will be followed (see Appendix 2)

Layout

The layout has been limited to encompass the current footprint, therefore offers no alteration to the orientation.

We have included access through the hostel reception to the new units. This will ensure that residents are welcomed and informed and able to take advantage of onsite staff knowledge and assistance with the comfort and enjoyment whilst staying at Longstone Lodge. Also when reception in the Hostel is closed, during café trading hours, staff are onsite to assist with any resident's issues.

Each self catering unit has been purposely positioned to give living space at the front of the building to take advantage of a sea view from each dormer window.



Scale

Please see plans for accurate building scales.

Landscaping

New landscaping would be minimal as this additional space is within the current building. Any landscaping will only be required following building material access during the construction phase and the joining of walkway access to the units to the existing pathways, created during the hostel build.

Appearance

We are conscious that the design and layout of this scheme should follow the quality and 'feel' of the current decor and themes.

We will continue to invest in the following statement “**décor that compliments the natural land and seascape of the islands, using rustic wood and natural colour schemes that are attractive and characteristic**”. Therefore our choices on construction, layout, materials and decoration are guided by this notion.

We have and will continue to endeavour to select materials that can be easily maintained and hold their quality appearance well into the future. Furniture, fixtures and fittings need to be durable to ensure that they are both attractive and good value for money.

Access

Access has been greatly improved following the café renovation and hostel build. The new self-catering units will immediately take advantage of these improvements.

Signage will be positioned to indicate access to the additional accommodation and reception. This will all be located onsite, no additional offsite signage will be required.



The recent renovations improved parking facilities (with electrical point), new pathways and regular resurfacing of the ram access road from Longstone Terrace.

Appendix

1. Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust: Bat Survey
2. Waste Management Plan