

**New Access and Alterations to
Scillonia Building Supplies
22 Porthmellon Industrial Estate
St.Mary's
Isles of Scilly**



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

October 2019
(revised 31.10.19)

1. BACKGROUND

The original storage shed at 22 Porthmellon Industrial Estate was the first building constructed on this site in 1988. It has always served as Builders Merchants for the islands and currently trades as Scillonia Building Supplies.

Mark Wright started working in the construction trade on Scilly as a sole trader over 30 years ago. In 2005 he formed a limited company, Wright Construction Ltd, when his workload increased. At the same time, he moved into his current premises on the industrial estate. He now employs 4 full-time employees and 1 part-time member of staff. Details of his company can be found on his company website www.wrightconstruction.eu. The home page explains that 'Wright Construction is a well-established privately-owned company that holds a solid reputation on the islands, specialising in the fields of construction and civil engineering works'.



In addition to the core construction work, the applicant has set up a management structure to run the retail operation, 'Scillonia Building Supplies'. This takes advantage of the planning approved retail (A1) use within the premises established by the 2006 'Certificate of Lawful Use' application (ref. P.5806). The experience gained in this retail sector has made the applicant aware of an opportunity to expand this business in a sustainable out-of-town location. Over the last 12 months a 'master-plan' for the site has been developed and a dialogue with the Isles of Scilly Council has been established (see below). This planning application seeks to formalise the different elements of the vision for the site. This supporting statement should be read in conjunction with application drawings numbers 1977-P01 to P13 inclusive.

2. EXISTING BUILDINGS

The 1136 m² application site is occupied by the original 160 m² portal frame storage shed, a large 112 m² lean-to extension, a second smaller 69 m² storage building and a connecting flat-roofed link. The building footprint currently occupies about 50% of the site. Externally, there is a large concreted forecourt accessed from the industrial estate and a storage area / parking space with an existing gated access from Telegraph Road to the North West. A small timber shed has been located here where the applicant's partner runs a beauty treatment business.



The 2005 satellite photo above shows the main building with the 'lean-to' addition in the centre of the image

The main buildings are typical industrial units with large span steel portal frames roofed with corrugated sheeting with integral roof-lights. The original walls were constructed from concrete block-work, but these have been over-clad on the current front elevation with vertical timber boarding. The applicants have done their best to enhance the appearance of their property by maintaining the site in good condition and introducing some planting to soften the general impact. The more recent 2015 materials storage shed is also timber clad with 'Big 6' corrugated roof sheeting.

3. DESIGN BRIEF

A number of factors have driven the new planning application to regenerate 22 Porthmellon Industrial Estate. Wright Construction are committed to retaining their core construction company business and offering a personal service to a wide range of clients. Improvements on the site will hopefully enable them to deliver a more efficient service. The applicant would also like to expand the retail element of the business by creating a new out-of-town general store.

Certain factors have hampered the business operation in the past. The main challenge has been congestion on the industrial estate by vehicles blocking the access road (see photo below). The applicant has been in contact with the Council to express his ongoing exasperation that staff and customers have been unable to reach his property at the end of the cul-de-sac. Fortunately, the site has a second road frontage onto Telegraph Road to the North West. A vehicular entrance to the site from the main road was granted in 2014 (ref. P/14/032). There is the potential here to re-configure this access and create new customer parking with on-site turning close to the new 'front door' to the building. A safe pedestrian access can also be created here with no confusion between vehicular traffic movement.



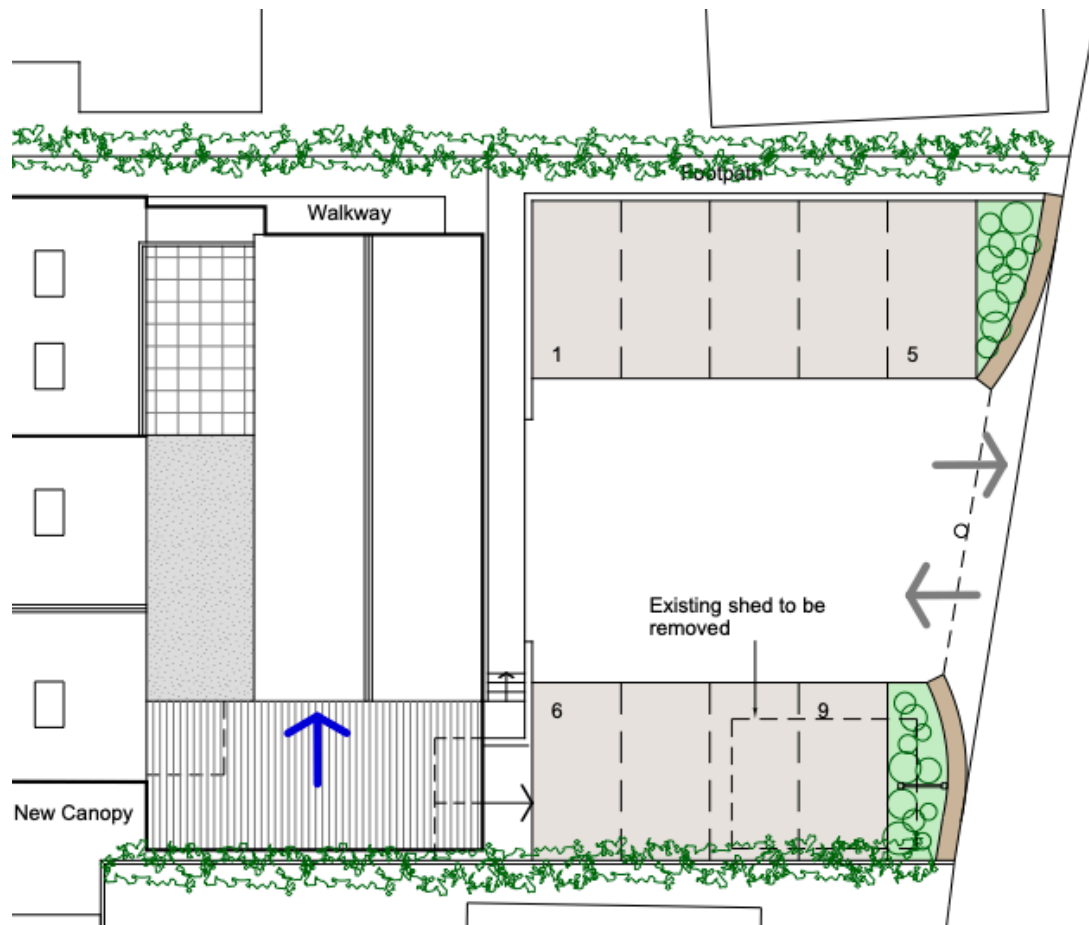
View of estate from truck window

By re-orientating the building towards Telegraph Road, a new building frontage can be created with appropriate signage. The retail unit will become more obvious and easier to access thereby improving the customer experience. The rear access from the industrial estate will be retained for deliveries and the construction company business.

The applicants are keen to incorporate other improvements to their premises as part of the planning application and also regularise other changes that have been made to the property over the years. These changes and improvements are summarised in the section below.

4. PROPOSED DESIGNS

Some extracts from the planning application package are included on the following pages such as the new entrance arrangements below.

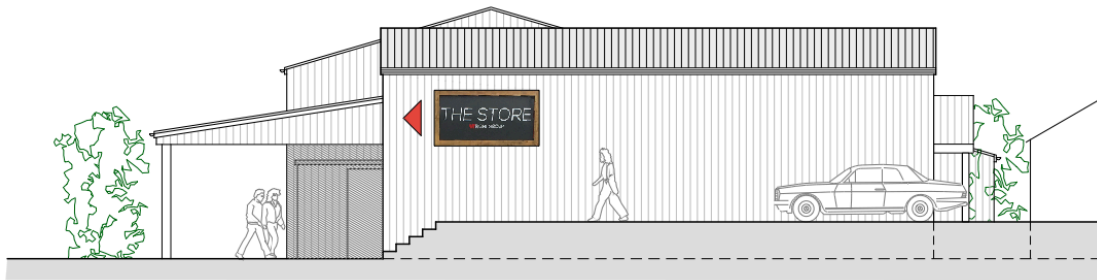


The elements of the planning application can be summarised as follows:

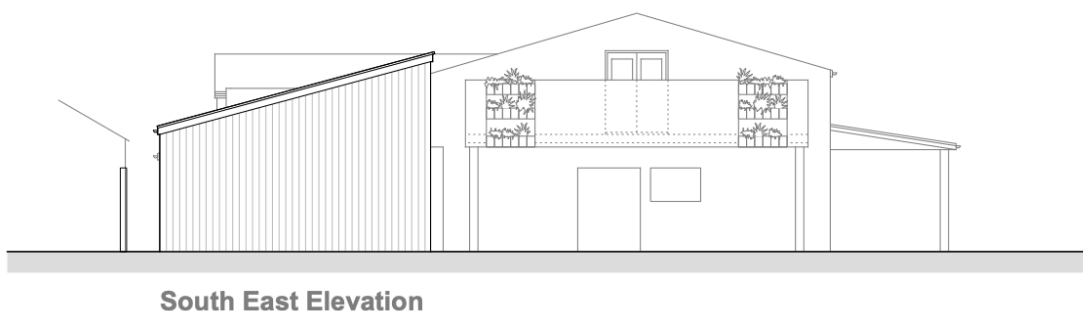
- Changes to Telegraph Road access including provision of new customer car park and pedestrian entrance
- Conversion of existing first floor open market 3-bedroom apartment into 2-bedroom apartment and 2-bedroom staff flat including first floor extension on roof terrace
- Construction of new storage and distribution shed
- Construction of lean-to canopy to provide covered entrance to new front door
- Alterations to A1/B8 mix of use areas within existing ground floor premises
- Regularisation of existing elements of the building in planning terms including balcony over existing covered entrance, mezzanine office and terrace over flat roof link

In many cases the planning proposals are internal so there will be no impact on the external elevations. This applies to the internal residential conversion and the changes in the retail / storage space. Where external changes are

proposed, care has been taken to respect surroundings and improvements have been made where possible. For example, the landscaping in the new public forecourt with planters inside the stone boundary walls will improve the street scene and public realm. Simple changes such as staining the timber cladding and carefully positioned signage (see elevation below) will make a positive design statement. Surface finishes in the forecourt will be permeable and there will be a contrast between footpaths and parking bays. The roof canopy will be pitched (rather than flat) to mirror pitched roof profiles elsewhere.



At the rear of the building a mono-pitch roof design has been chosen for the storage and distribution shed. This has been partially influenced by discussion with the immediate neighbours, Phoenix Art Studio, who are keen to keep the eaves height as low as possible by the boundary. It is likely that this building will be manufactured by Fingle Farm, a locally based company that have a proven track record of supplying buildings to Scilly in the past. The height of the storage shed has been kept to a minimum and a roof pitch has been selected to match the pitch of the main buildings. The location of the shed will enable the existing parking bay for 5 vehicles to be retained on the opposite site boundary.



5. NEW DWELLING

The element of the planning submission that triggers the need for a Design and Access Statement is the 'new dwelling' created by the sub-division of the existing first floor flat. This section therefore considers Design, Residential Amenity and Access in relation to the new staff flat only.

Design

The existing first floor apartment utilises the former roof void in the main portal frame industrial building. Planning permission has already been granted so the residential use on the industrial estate has been established. The apartment is a generous one and provides 136m² of accommodation at first floor level only as illustrated on drawing number 1977-P04. This excludes the ground floor access area and staircase and any associated outdoor spaces.

The apartment is currently occupied by the applicant and his family. However, the full floor plan is seldom occupied so the residential space is not used to its full potential. Sub-dividing the first floor into two apartments will therefore make more efficient use of the accommodation. The original unit will reduce in size to a 2-bedroom 101m² flat with its own private staircase. The new apartment is created by converting the current dining area and study into 2 bedrooms and enclosing a section of the current roof terrace to create living space. This will be a discreet extension sitting between the two pitched roofs of the original industrial building and the later storage shed. The extension will be tucked behind the main buildings, so it will scarcely be visible from the highway or public vantage points (see NW Elevation on drawing number 1977-P09). Walls will be clad in timber boarding to match the existing building group and a flat roof will keep the height of this structure to an absolute minimum.

The proposed first floor plan (1997-P07A) shows the internal layout. Other design elements of note are the retention of an existing staircase leading from the staff room to the current flat, the conversion of the staff room into an entrance lobby with a bathroom and store and an external gallery / escape route connecting the staff flat to the neighbouring office for Wright Construction. Including the ground floor, this new unit will provide 80m² of residential accommodation. As a staff flat, it is ideally located in the heart of the work spaces. Security will be improved as there will be a 24-hour occupation of the buildings. There will be other benefits to the business as staff will always be readily available. Travel to work times will certainly be minimal and there will be no need to use motor vehicles for daily journeys to open or close the premises.

Residential Amenity

The staff flat will primarily be created by converting a section of the existing building. The applicant has already demonstrated the quality of his building work through the gradual regeneration of the existing building complex and track record throughout the islands (see www.wrightconstruction.eu). These high standards will apply to the new apartment. Sound insulation will be incorporated in the new compartment walls and floors to ensure that the living spaces feel completely separate from the core business activities. Fortunately, Unit 22 is at the Northern end of the industrial estate bounding Telegraph Road. The new apartment will therefore be close to the coastline and next to some of the best beaches on Scilly. From the roof terrace outside the sitting room there will be views over the islands towards Sampson and, no

doubt, many impressive sunsets. Although this outdoor terrace is only small, it will be a multi-use space for outdoor eating or relaxing. The existing roof profiles will help to protect the terrace from the elements in poor weather and will provide privacy. The terrace will also be something of a sun-trap on good days.

The residential unit is in a sustainable location within easy walking distance of the town centre. All of the amenities of Hugh Town are therefore at hand and there will be no need to rely on the use of a motor vehicle.

Access

Section 7 below deals with 'Access' for the full planning application. In terms of accessibility within the staff flat, the conversion will be fully compliant with the current Building Regulations – in particular with Part M dealing with 'accessibility'. Reaching the front door of the flat will be easy via the under-cover new roof canopy. From Telegraph Road there will be a safe pedestrian route avoiding the new parking area. Access from the flat to the work spaces could not be more straightforward as travel distances are minimal.

6. PLANNING CONSULTATION

Prior to the submission of this application, a pre-app enquiry was submitted to the Isles of Scilly Council for the proposed new entrance and car park (ref. PA/19/042). The response dated 09 September 2019 has informed this new planning application. In addition to providing feedback on the new access, useful planning advice was provided for other elements of the proposal. Some of these comments are no longer applicable. For example, the timber shed used as a beauty therapy room is to be removed as part of the creation of the new parking forecourt. The pre-app advice also suggested that further specialist advice and guidance is obtained for the re-positioned entrance and visibility splays for emerging vehicles. As a result, a highways consultant has been engaged as part of the design team.

In addition to the pre-app report, the applicant has been in regular contact with the planning case officer and her colleagues. A brief meeting was held in the Council offices on 24 September with the architect when both Lisa Walton and Craig Dryden were present. It is hoped that this level of pre-application engagement with the Council will pave the way to a smooth planning application process. The applicant has also made immediate neighbours aware of the application proposals and is not aware of any opposition.



Above: Example of a Fingle Farm agricultural building showing the high quality of the building product

7. ACCESS (Full Development)

This report has already highlighted the fact that 'access' is one of the key driving forces behind the planning submission. At present access is prevented on a daily basis by increasing congestion on the industrial estate. At best this is frustrating – at worst, dangerous, with potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

There is a shallow fall across the site from the main road down to the back of the original site. This will inevitably result in a short flight of shallow steps from the car park down to the new front door. These steps will be suitable for ambulant disabled persons and there will also be a ramp accessible to wheelchair users. Once inside the building the whole of the ground floor is on one level, so it will be easy to negotiate. All doorways will be a minimum of 838mm wide so will be accessible by wheelchairs. A disabled toilet with a sliding door (easy to use) has already been created so this will be a unique accessible facility in a retail unit on the islands.

The parking area has been designed so that cars can enter the site, turn and then re-join the highway by exiting in forward gear. The services of Jon Pearson, Highways Consultant have been engaged to ensure that vehicles can safely enter and exit the site. A Transportation Advisory Note (TAN) is being prepared and should be read in conjunction with the other planning documents.



Above: View along Telegraph Road showing road frontage

8. SUMMARY

This is a well-considered planning application to improve and regularise the commercial activities at number 22 Porthmellon Industrial Estate. The applicant is keen to carry out the proposed alterations, extensions and improvements as soon as planning permission has been hopefully granted. There will be a range of planning gains and benefits as a result. In employment terms this application will result in the gain of 3 full time and 2 part-time members of staff. Services to local residents, businesses and visitors to the islands will be improved. There will also be aesthetic improvements to the prominent road frontage by Porthmellon Beach.

The applicant hopes that the planning submission will be supported by the Isles of Scilly Council planning committee. If any queries arise during the planning process every effort will be made to respond to them.

Michael R Bradbury RIBA
09 October 2019
(Revised 31 October 2019)