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Sent: 21 July 2020 13:49
To: Planning (Isles of Scilly) <planning@scilly.gov.uk>
Subject: P/20/048/FUL

P/20/048/FUL Men-a Vaur accessible dwelling for holiday letting

I write again to object to the revised planning application made by the owner of Men-a-Vaur, whilst holding firm to the many statements I made in objection over 2018-2019 during the first installment of this ongoing saga. The original planning application was robustly and critically deconstructed by all residents and home-owners in this lovely part of Hugh Town. Certain key stalwarts on Church Road, defenders of the spirit of place (if you like), worked tirelessly to co-ordinate a dynamic local response from across Church Road, Branksea Close and Rams Valley and thus perfectly captured the strong sense of community that pervades in this residential area, allied to a passionate defence of our valued green space.

The orchard and garden behind Men-a-Vaur is a cultural, historic and ecological space in a crowded wider urban environment. It has 'value' that is diverse and deep, spanning impulses that embrace utility, the aesthetic and ecosystem integrity. It may have some non-native tree and plant species within its boundaries, but that framework describes much of vegetated Scilly, indeed, it is a defining feature of Scillonian natural history. As an 'environment' academic I often bemoan the fact that rather blinkered private sector survey ecologists tend to bluntly prize the native over non-native without recognising rich socio-cultural affiliations or local connections. All residents of this part of Hugh Town, human and non-human, consider this extensive garden to be part of the landscape of home. Our habitat. To destroy it for mere profit strikes at the very heart of the spirit of this place, something we all hold dear. In a functioning ecology sense this garden green space provides a wildlife corridor for birds, insects and bats, which not only bring delight to many residents but also act as key indicators of environmental vitality. The garden bustles with wildlife all year round, breeding, foraging, passing through, enabling local residents to mark time with the passing of seasons. It is so much more than just a garden.

Whilst it is laudable that this development seeks to provide focused accommodation for disabled visitors, that needs to be set against a wider context of increasing disabled provision across the archipelago in serviced accommodation, but critically issues of poor accessibility around pavements, roads, quays and footpaths. Some hotels in the centre of Hugh Town have made great strides recently to offer accessible rooms for all, with associated wet rooms, and this seems a far more sensible and safe way forward. What is to say that the bulk of lettings at this new development would not be to able-bodied visitors to guarantee good income? What guarantee would be made, in reality, that the bulk of all lettings would only be to individuals or groups with disabilities?

Or pressing concern to all are deep-rooted longstanding infrastructure concerns, around water usage, drainage, sewers and waste. The old fragile network here is often overloaded and 12+8 visitors at Men-a-Vaur places an almost intolerable additional load from one property on a creaking system. This is a challenge on Church Road, Branksea Close and in Rams Valley. Allied to the infrastructure debate is one of vehicular access during the build,

which would, in the most hopeful sense, be hugely challenging, disruptive and potentially damaging to existing buildings and boundaries. The Branksea Close path is pitted, weakened and vulnerable already. It could not take abuse from heavy machinery.

I thank you for your consideration of my varied objections.

Dr Rob Lambert