

DOLPHIN HOUSE

DESIGN, ACCESS, & HERITAGE STATEMENT

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Dolphin House, Dolphin, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, TR24 0QD
Listing Entry Number: 1376770

This document has been prepared to support a Planning and Listed Building application for alterations to Dolphin House, which is grade II listed. The proposed modifications would involve limited internal alterations to original house, a two storey rear extension to replace a C20th service tower, and enlargement of the existing southeastern wing.

The proposals contained herewith have been developed with reference to guidance issued by Historic England. The proposed alterations would provide a more practical and habitable house. They have been developed in a careful and considered manner, intended to respect the character to the original dwelling and rectify ill-considered C20th modifications.

The proposed works form part of the island's policy for ongoing investment in its accommodation provision. Inevitably, investment on Tresco has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, restaurant and retail services across the archipelago benefiting.



CONTEXT & LISTING

Dolphin House is a Grade II listed late Georgian House, constructed on Treско in 1799. It is sited on a northeast facing inland plot on the northern side of the ridge between New Grimsby and Old Grimsby.

This property is one of the most elevated dwellings on the island. It is cut into the hillside just below the topographical ridge. Its primary northeast facing elevation overlooks St Nicholas's Church below, and Old Grimsby quay and harbour beyond.

The property is part of a small hamlet known as Towns Hill. The house is set within an extensive gardens plot, and is placed above, and well back from the lane.

Dolphin House is a formal dwelling of some status, second only to the Abbey in terms of hierarchy of residences on the island. It was originally built as a missionary house for Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. It was later used as a parsonage associated with St Nicholas's Church, and as the Godolphin land agent's house, before Treско was acquired by Augustus John Smith in 1834. It is now a private residence used through much of the year as a holiday let.

The house sits in proximity to other Listed Buildings, including, Dolphin Cottage, Ivy Cottage, Rose Cottage, Thatch and the Church of St Nicholas.

LIST ENTRY

TRESCO DOLPHIN TOWN Dolphin House and attached outbuildings and wall II House. 1799. Coursed and squared granite, with ashlar front; hipped dry slate roof with symmetrical end stacks finished in brick. Double-depth plan with rear extension and outbuildings.

Two storeys with attic; symmetrical front, three windows across at first floor. Flat arches with voussoirs over late C19 replacement sashes, with paired 2/2-pane sashes to ground floor and tripartite sashes flanking 3/3-pane sash to ground floor. Hipped roof dormers with horned 2/2-pane sashes. Mid C19 front porch with 'picturesque' effect masonry. Original half-glazed six-panel door with decorative fanlight. Granite lintels over sashes to rear. Later small two-storey rendered addition to rear. Extension to east, of painted roughly coursed granite, incorporated into main house as dining room. Sundial, dated 1800, fixed to east-facing wall of house.

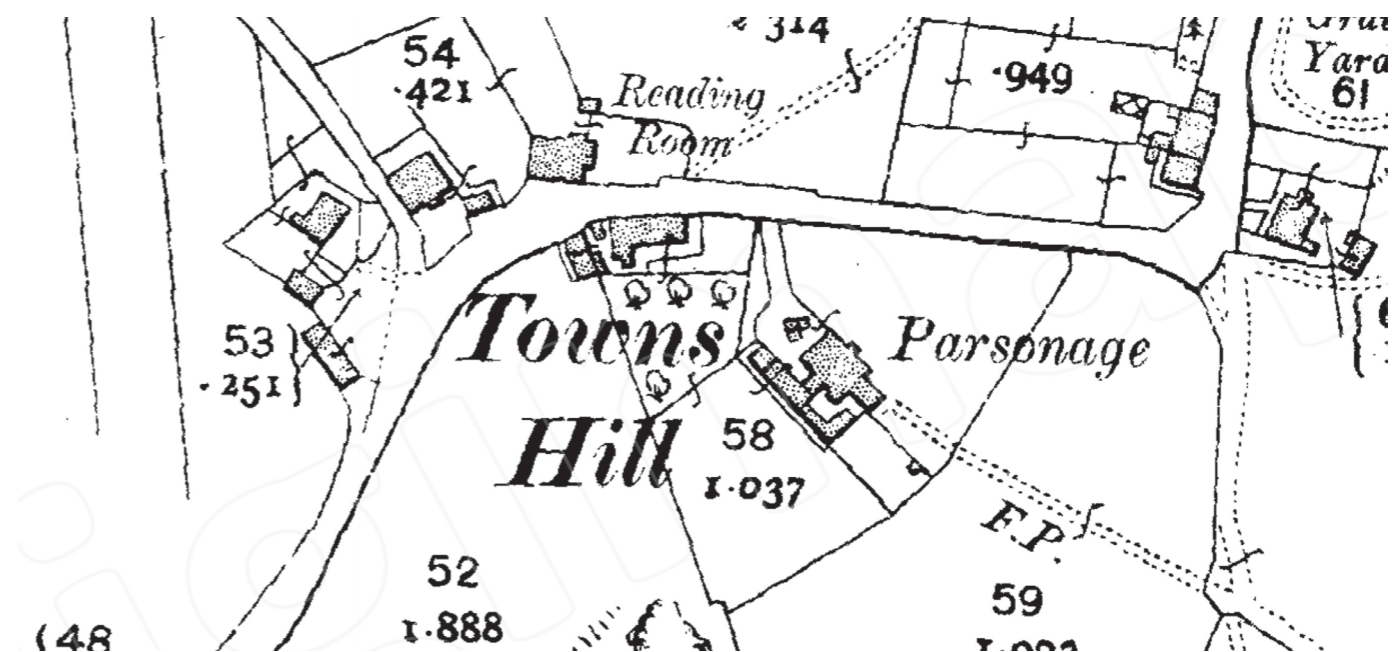
INTERIOR: has retained panelled shutters and doors, including six-panelled door to rear rooms with decorative fanlight.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: boundary wall with pyramidal gatepiers extends along the lane for approximately 50 metres.

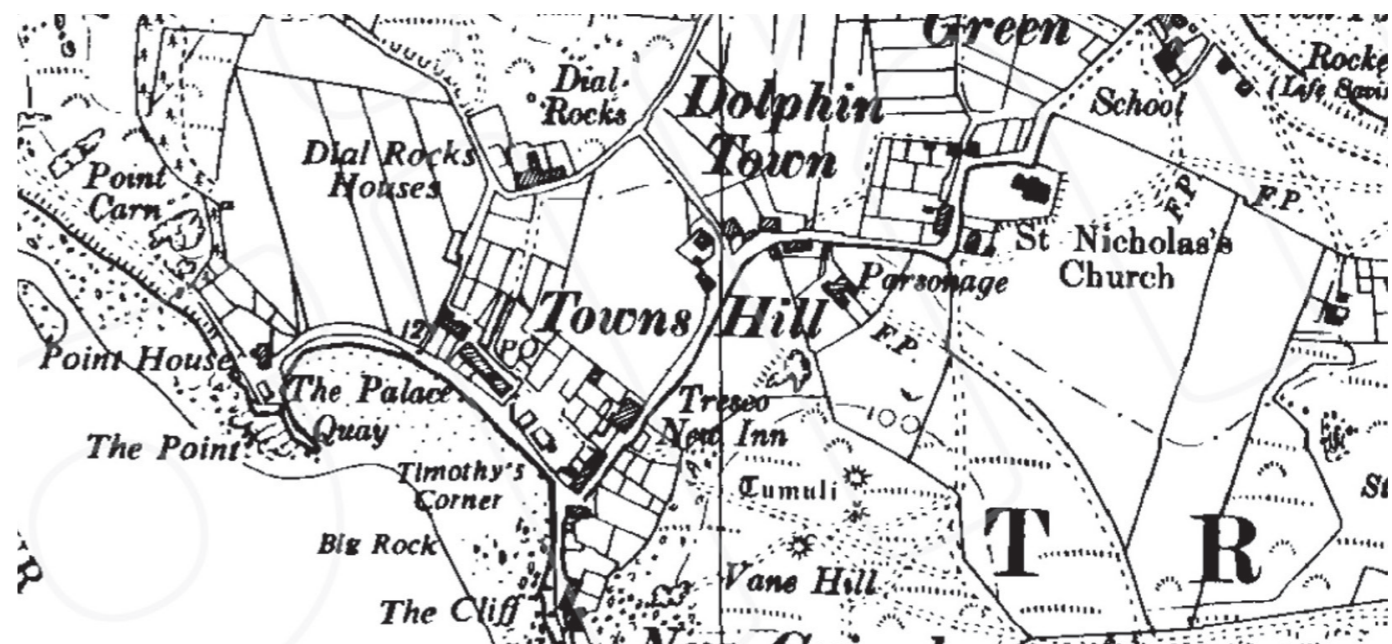
A complete Late Georgian house, which also has significance within the context of the historical development of the Isles of Scilly.



1889 OS MAP



1900 OS MAP



1960 OS MAP

EXISTING BUILDING

The dwelling is constructed from granite masonry. It has a three-bay plan with the reception rooms and primary bedrooms on the primary northern side, and smaller ancillary rooms to the rear.

The primary northeast elevation is granite ashlar, the peripheral bays have large double width windows with voussoir granite flat arch heads. These are infilled with 2-2 pane double sashes at ground floor level and at first floor level with 2-2 central sashes with fixed half-width side lights. The pane sizes and horns indicate that these are C19th replacements not the original joinery.

A porch in the romantic style has been added to this elevation. It incorporates large rounded granite boulders and raked back pointing to achieve a rusticated appearance. This addition is consistent in style with other mid-C19th architectural additions made around the island, under the auspices of Augustus Smith (Lord Proprietor of the Scillies 1834 – 1872).

The rear and side elevations are formed in random coursed roughly squared granite, and have been painted in some areas. There are no windows in the side elevations. Each features a substantial chimney breast that occupies much of the elevation. These terminate in granite stacks that have subsequently extended with red brick, presumably to improve the draw.

The rear elevation has asymmetrically placed sash window openings. Joinery in these openings has been replaced with uPVC imitation sashes.

The roof is covered with scantle; a technique that involves the use of particularly small slates of varying size, laid with a triple lap. Larger slates are used at the eaves and on the verges to offer more resistance to wind. The rest of the roof is filled with the smaller slates with a general reduction in size towards the ridge. Two small hipped dormers break the northeast roof slope. The joinery and scale of these windows suggests that they were installed in the mid-late C19th (horns on the sashes).

The house has been extended on the rear southwest elevation with a C20th service tower containing WC and first floor bathroom. This is finished in render and painted. An asymmetric projecting parapet on one side houses satellite + TV equipment. Openings are meagre and placed at random. Joint lines in the masonry indicate alterations to this section of building. However, there is not sufficient evidence available to ascertain what form this previous incarnation took (possibly extended from single to two storey).

The building has also been extended on the SE side elevation, with a small single storey masonry wing with double pitched slated roof (not scantle). This wing is identifiably



NORTH ELEVATION AND GARDEN



SOUTH ELEVATION - Note; blocked in door, uPVC windows & later masonry on rear face east wing.

present on the 1888 map. However, the masonry here is not jointed into the side elevation of the main body of the house, demonstrating that it is a later addition. It is also cruder, with more irregularly sized and shaped stones, particularly on the rear elevation (which perhaps indicates that this side was infilled at a later date).

Internally, there have been a number of alterations. Opposite is a plan of the supposed original layout, deduced by looking at original joinery, window openings and identifying structural alterations.

The walls that enclosed the front entrance hall have been taken removed to create one large living room across the front of the house. From this, a further opening into the rear kitchen has also been made. The opening into the dining room extension is narrow and hampered by the chimney breast, suggesting this space was not originally intended to connect directly into the dwelling.

The first floor has been rearranged to enable the installation of the bathroom between two bedrooms. A lobby has been cut into the rear eastern bedroom to provide a replacement access to the front bedroom.

The staircase is a late C20th installation, of inappropriate style, and poorly planned configuration. Head clearance under the half landing to the rear entrance door is insufficient. The half landing leading to the attic bifurcates a tall one-and-a-half-height stair well window. This confident architectural gesture would formerly have flooded the stairwell with light, but is now enclosed by the stair tower.

The attic is very small and awkwardly planned. Given this, and the encumbered stair arrangement required for access, it is hard to imagine that this space was originally designed and constructed to be occupation, but was perhaps instead converted at a later date.

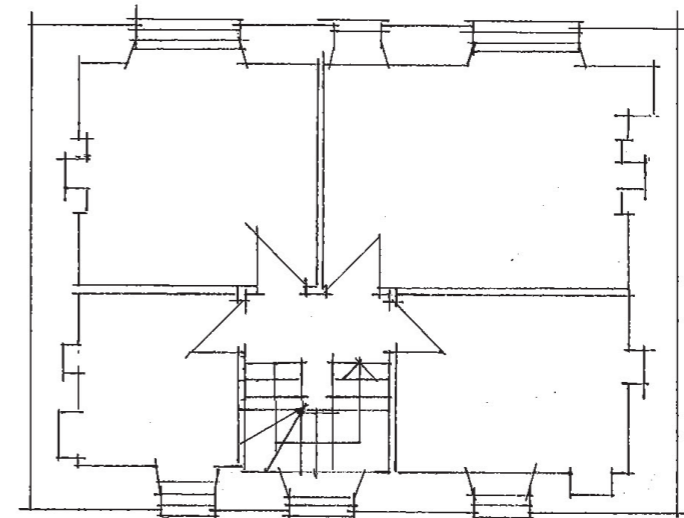
Based on the clues garnered from the existing building fabric, a plan of the probable original layout (+ eastern wing) is illustrated opposite.

To the rear is a small sunken courtyard, bounded by high walls and outbuildings that retain the land to the south. The 1908 map shows these buildings formerly wrapped around all sides of the rear yard. Now only the NW portion of these buildings remains. This is split into three cells, two of which are currently unroofed. A notably large flat granite slab is embedded into the internal masonry of the northwest elevation.

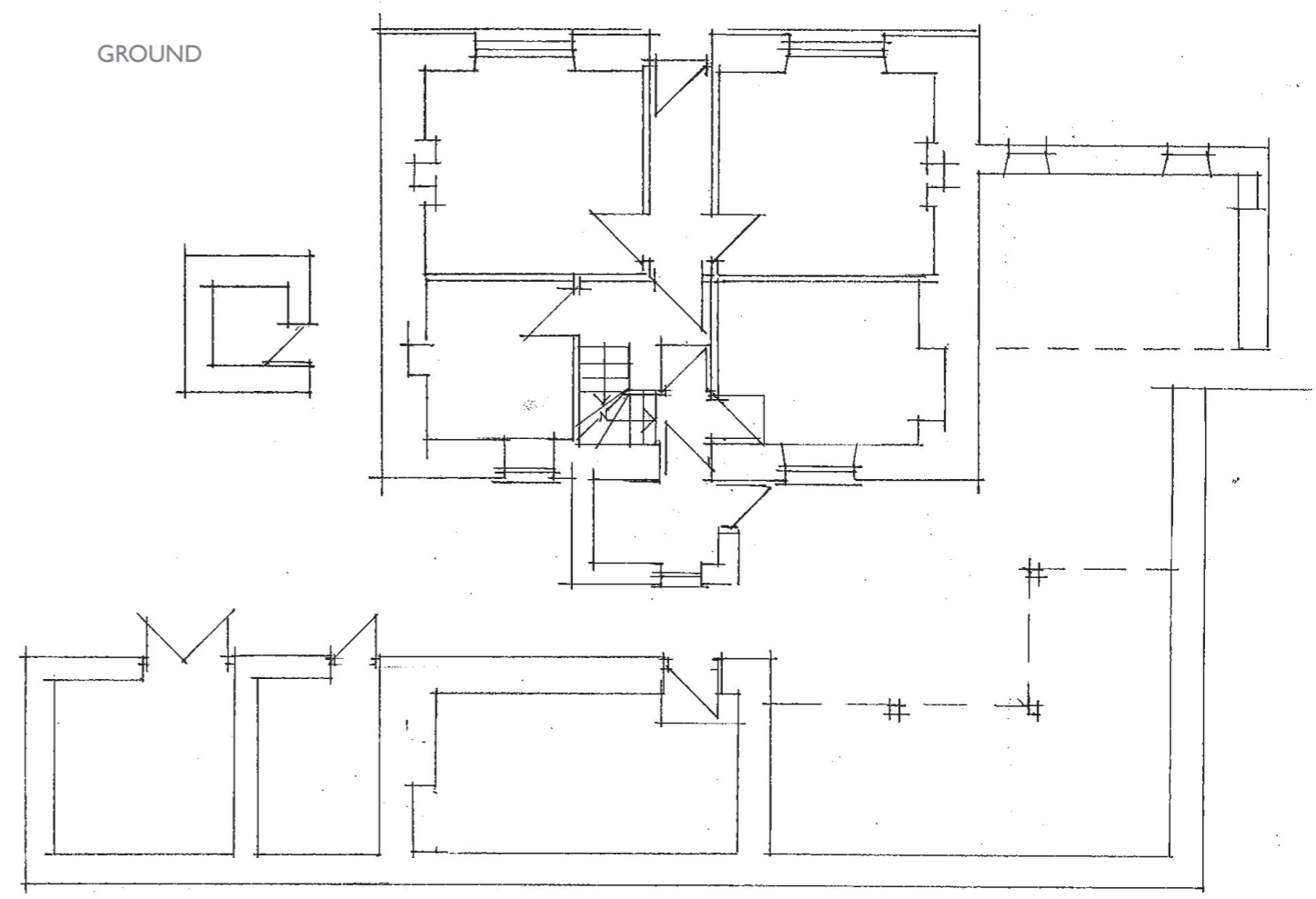
A slate lined water tank, used to store rainwater when there was no water supply on the island, is still present adjacent to the northeast elevation.

The grounds are arranged with private gardens to the North and the service area / courtyard on the rear southern side, cut into the hillside. The primary access to the plot is from lane to the north. A particularly fine granite wall leads from the plot entrance to the house. This separates the visitor and services routes. On the north visitors' side, a path leads through the gardens to the rusticated entrance porch. On the south is an access drive leading to the courtyard and service buildings at the rear of the house.

FIRST



GROUND



PROBABLE ORIGINAL LAYOUT

PHOTOGRAPHS



Attic Dormer



First Floor Bedroom Window. Note; view overlooking St Nicholas's Church



Ground Floor Living Room. Note; window joinery differs from first floor



Sun Dial Detail



Part Rear Elevation. Note; Later granite masonry to the rear of the eastern wing (uncoursed with Grey cement pointing); GLF rear window is an infilled door.



Dining room in former outbuilding



Wall and gate separating front and back of house approaches



Kitchen, Note; uPVC window; C20th fitting and finishes; alterations to chimney breast

ALTERATIONS

The proposed changes to the property have been developed to respect and re-establish the historic core of the dwelling, reversing insensitive C20th alterations, and revealing lost period features. At the same time, appropriate alterations and extensions are proposed in areas where later, less sensitive, additions to the original dwelling have already been undertaken. It is hoped this strategy would enhance the authenticity of the dwelling, whilst improving the comfort of the accommodation provision to be more reflective of the property's historic hierarchical status on the island.

THE MAIN HOUSE

Within the historic core of the dwelling, the existing C20th staircase would be entirely removed, and replaced with a new stair that extends to the first floor only. The half landing would engage with the bottom of the original tall stairwell light that is currently obscured by the attic stair half landing. Removal of the flight up to the attic would re-establish this significant opening as the dominant feature within the stairwell. The attic landing would be left open into the stair well so as to minimise changes and allow access via a ladder.

The existing door opening in the stud wall, between the stairwell and current kitchen, would be enlarged to create an open library that connects onto the stairwell at ground floor level. Nibs and a bulkhead would be maintained so that the former separation between these two spaces remains expressed. The opening between the living space and the kitchen would be narrowed, with new closures installed to match the existing joinery. The window, (which was formerly a door), would be cut down to form window seat and better proportioned sash window.

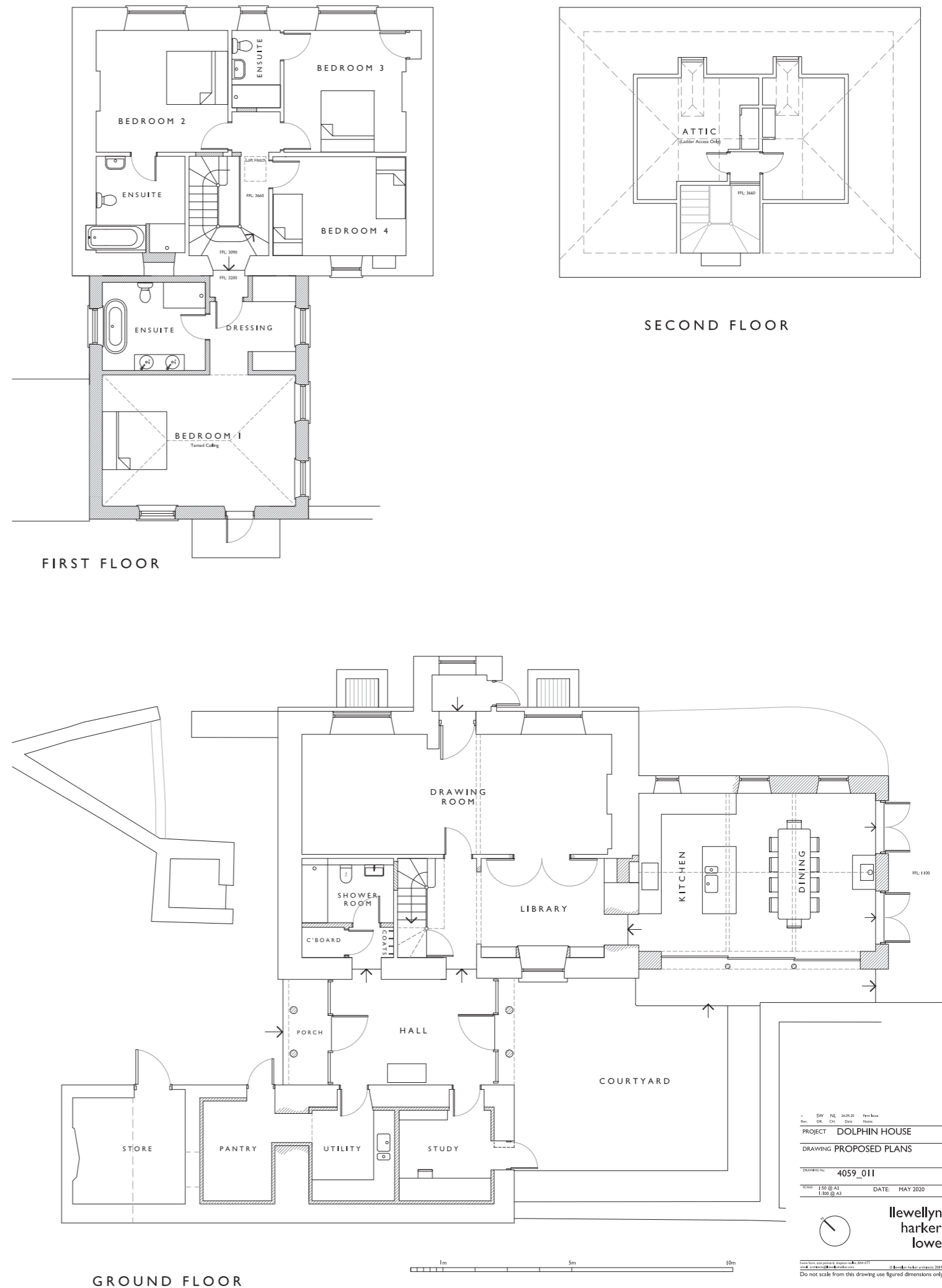
The rear western room would be subdivided to create a cupboard and shower room, making the dwelling more accessible for wheelchair users and the ambulant disabled.

The first floor layout would be rationalised. The two bedrooms at the front of the house would be connected ensuite to the existing bathrooms. This allows the removal of the C20th lobby that cuts into the rear eastern bedroom.

Excepting the removal of the stairs, the attic would remain unchanged. The scantle roof, which is in need of repair, would be lifted and relaid over new felt. Insulation between rafters would be upgraded with a breathable mineral wool from above. uPVC windows throughout would be replaced with timber slim double-glazed sash windows that replicate the profiles of those on the primary elevation.

THE SOUTHEASTERN WING

This section of the building would be part demolished and enlarged. The majority of



the principal north-facing granite masonry elevation, would be retained.

The gable and rear elevation (which has later poor-quality granite work and a 1980s timber french door) would be demolished and rebuilt to enlarge the size of the enclosed space. Material salvaged from the demolition would be used in reconstruction of the new masonry walls. The C20th roof would also have to be replaced and rebuilt to suit the new footprint.

The space created by these changes would be used to house a comfortable kitchen and dining room. It would have a glazed connection to rear courtyard, which reproduces the original open-sided character of this section when it was a service building rather than part of the habitable accommodation. There would be twin double door openings in the gable, to bring morning light into the space.

These alterations improve the internal living spaces, and their connection to the garden and courtyard.

REAR EXTENSION + OUTBUILDINGS

The rear elevation of the house, and the various extensions and outbuildings, have been incrementally altered and added to over time with little regard for the cohesiveness and quality of the original house. The consequence of these accumulated changes is a compromised rear facade that longer exhibits the dignified qualities of the original.

The unattractive existing two-storey rear extension and covered porch would be demolished and replaced with a larger two-storey extension that takes its architectural cues from the original house. This would span over the existing outbuildings to connect to the upper garden at first floor level.

At ground floor level a new entrance porch and hall is created in the space between the rear elevation of the original house and the face of the outbuildings. Granite columns and lintels frame the entrance and support the first floor level. Full width glazing on both sides maintains the visual connection between the east and west courtyards.

The existing outbuildings are retained and incorporated into the ground floor plan to form a study and utility room. These would be lined with delta membrane and insulated stud work to prevent damp ingress from the solid masonry retaining walls. This is a fully reversible solution; not harmful to the original building fabric in the way liquid applied membranes can be.

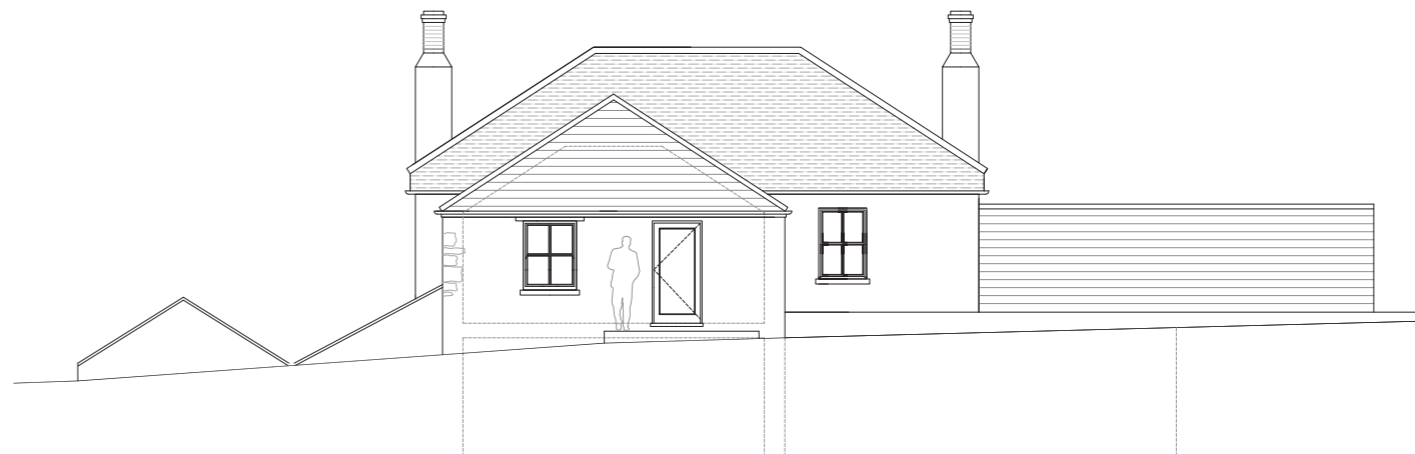
The first floor would contain a new bedroom suite, which would connect with a single door to the upper level garden.



EXISTING NORTHEAST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTHEAST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTHWEST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

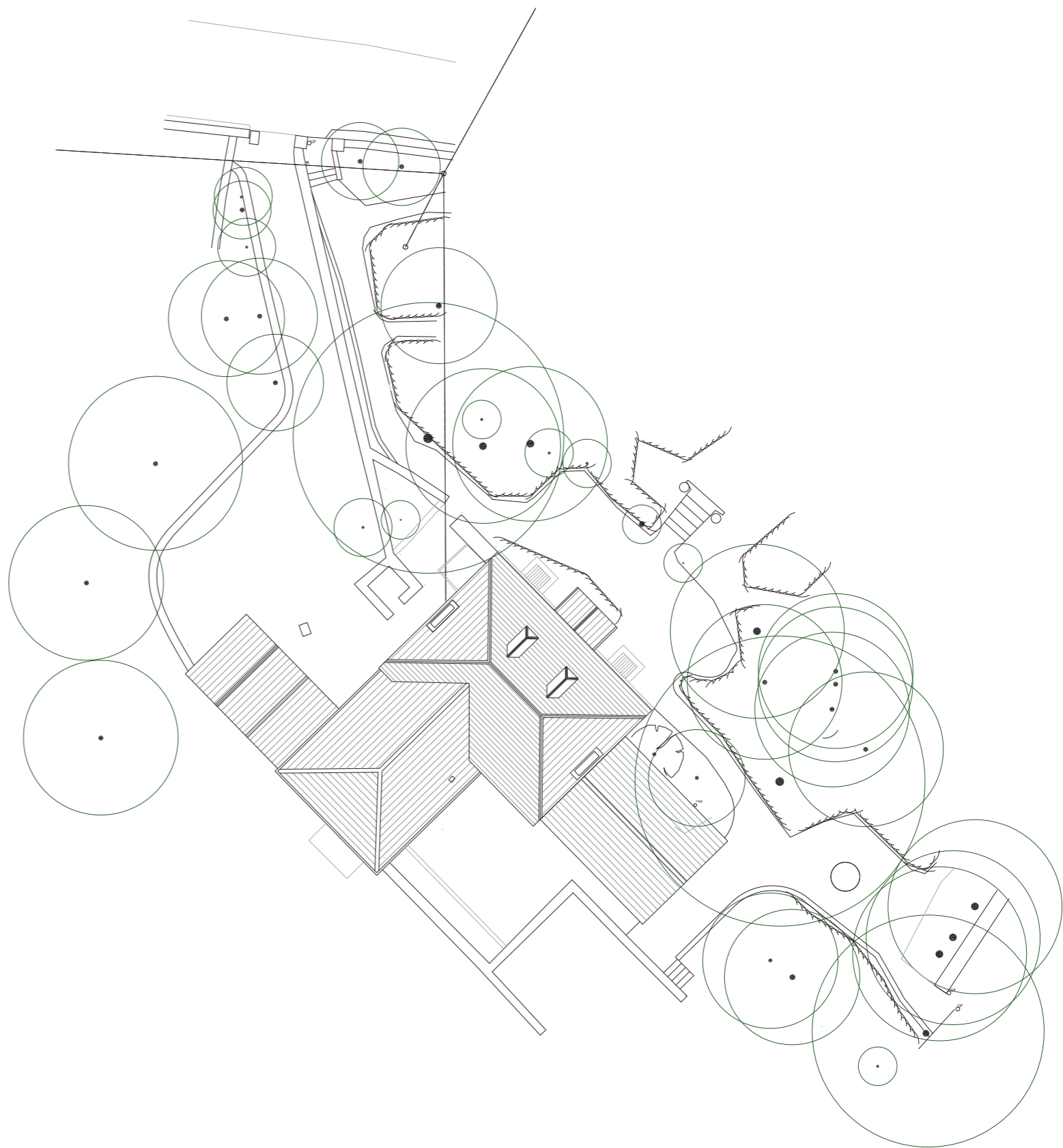


The roof extension would be pitched and hipped to complement the existing roof. It would be slated in blue-grey slate, to aid legibility between old and new. The first floor would be skinned with coursed granite rubble masonry. Eaves and ridgeline would be lower than the existing roof to ensure subservience to the main body of the dwelling. Windows take their proportion from the front facing sashes, but are of a reduced scale, again to maintain the hierarchy of the various elements of the building. New windows would be painted timber sashes with slim double glazed units.

The existing rear store buildings that are not incorporated into the new rear wing would be re-roofed to prevent the masonry from falling into further disrepair. The former roofline evident from the existing gables would be reinstated.

GARDEN

The principle south facing garden would remain unchanged. As would the the historically significant drive, pathway and granite separating wall, and the service yard adjacent to the rear entrance.



SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The proposals have been developed to include a range of strategies to achieve sustainability in construction and in the building's ongoing use.

EMBODIED ENERGY IN CONSTRUCTION :

A considerable proportion of a building's carbon footprint is attributable to the manufacturing and transportation of building materials. To minimise this, the works would be primarily constructed from reclaimed material available on site and around the island.

New external elements would be constructed in long lasting materials, and installed with robust detailing, capable of withstanding the marine environment. Improved lifespan ensures a better return on the energy expended in construction.

The specification would be developed with reference to the BRE Green Guide to Specification to evaluate the environmental credentials of the materials procured from further afield.

HEAT LOSS AND ENERGY USE:

The proposals take a 'fabric first' approach to energy reduction, seeking to minimise consumption from the outset through the use of passive design principles. These include optimising orientation and massing, as well as ensuring the use of high-performance building fabric.

The new building elements will have insulation that is far superior to the existing elements that are being replaced. This will reduce the energy required to heat the property. Double glazing for new windows would improve air tightness and enhance thermal performance.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES:

The existing oil fired boiler would be removed. The dwelling would be heated using an air-source heat pump, which is typically 3 times more efficient than traditional direct electric heating methods, and does not involve the use of fossil fuels. This approach is particularly effective on Tresco, where the temperate climate ensures operating efficiency is maintained through the year.

An additional stove would allow the property to be heated using fuel from local and sustainable sources. This is particularly effective to top up the heating in the winter when efficiency of the air source heat pump is reduced.

The scheme as whole would be also sustainable in the broader sense; supporting the economy of the Islands and providing work for the people who live there. The Current Local Plan, encourages development of this sort to support tourism and the local economy.

ACCESS

OUTSIDE:

The existing lanes and driveway will be used to access the plot.

The absence of cars on Tresco creates a safe, peaceful and refreshing environment and reduces emissions. For less mobile guests, golf buggies or mobility scooters can be hired, but most visitors hire bicycles or walk.

The existing yard provides space for a golf cart to turn and park, and to unload adjacent to entrance door.

The replacement roof on the outbuilding would provide covered space to park store bicycles.

Tresco's emergency services would have sufficient existing capacity to deal with the modest increase in scale of this property.

INSIDE:

Internally the modifications have been developed to enable the property to better cater for elderly occupants or visitors with impaired mobility. They would comply with Part M of the Building Regulations as a minimum standard. The following improvements have been made to improve the overall accessibility of the dwelling:

- New doorways would have improved clearance.
- The front door would have a level threshold.
- The dwelling would have a reduced number of level changes across the ground floor.
- New glazed screens in the kitchen would be floor to ceiling, ensuring views out for seated occupants.
- More generous circulation spaces would make the dwelling more accessible for wheelchair users or ambulant disabled occupants.
- New services would be installed at heights to suit elderly / disabled occupants.
- Storage adjacent to the front door could accommodate mobility equipment.
- Provision of a large visitors W.C. shower room at ground floor level.
- Improved heating and comfort for elderly occupants.

PLANNING POLICY

The building has an established use as a private house which is let for holidays through much of the year. It has not been significantly altered in approx 30 years. The changes proposed herewith are in accordance with Tresco Island's policy of improving the quality of the existing building stock and accommodation.

The standard of accommodation within the dwelling would be substantially improved.

The attic floor headroom clearance, stair and means of escape from fire do not accord with current building regulations, or Nationally Described Space Standards. This arrangement is considered to be a risk to occupants. Removing access to the attic and providing additional first floor and ground floor accommodation in compensation for the loss of these bedrooms resolves these issues.

The accessibility of the property would also be improved as set out in the access statement.

The changes would improve the market rental value of this property, which in turn provides commercial justification for carrying out expensive restoration works; e.g. repairing the scantle roof.

The proposals form part of Tresco Island's continuing strategy of adaptation and diversification to ensure balance in the available housing stock and in the operation of the commercial enterprise as a whole.

The success of this strategy has been key to the ongoing viability of the island economy. Inevitably, investment on Tresco has an indirect economic benefit to other islands, with transport services, restaurant and retail services across the islands benefiting.



Isles of Scilly Local Plan

Including Minerals and Waste

2015 to 2030

SUMMARY

The purpose of this project is to provide enhanced accommodation for visitors to Tresco, and to undertake much needed repair works to the existing Grade II listed house.

Alterations would be restricted to the ancillary / rear rooms and elevations. The prominence of new built forms on the rear and sides of the house is mitigated by the way the original dwelling is cut into the hillside. The primary northeast facing elevation on the historic core of the house remains entirely unchanged, as would the principal rooms at the front of the house.

The changes to the existing building reinstate a number of original features including; the tall stairwell window opening, the open-sided character of the eastern wing / former outbuilding, the collapsed roofs on the western outbuildings.

Landscape alterations are kept to a minimum and limited to back of house locations.

Necessary repairs would be made to the roof that will safeguard the fabric and interior of this Grade II listed building into the future. The modifications would safeguard the historic hierarchical status of Dolphin House as the 'second house' on the island.

Unightly and inappropriate C20th modifications, including; the block work rear service tower, concrete paving slabs in the courtyard, uPVC windows, and stuck on external services, would be removed or replaced with more considered and appropriate alternatives.

The dwelling would be more energy efficient and sustainable as a result of the changes.

The proposals would improve the accessibility of this house.

