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Hugh St
St. Mary's
Isles of Scilly

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Design and Access Statement

WESTFORD HOUSE

Church St, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly.

Westford House is a Grade 2 Listed Building set along Church Street, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, neighboured by five similar constructed buildings dating back to C19.

The existing dwelling is used as a Bed and Breakfast business catering for 10 guests in 5 double en-suite Bedrooms. There is also Breakfast room and a shared Lounge for guests use.

The owners accommodation is located in the rear extension on the ground floor with 2 double bedrooms, office, and kitchen/utility with a lounge area on the first floor. There is a rear access to Porthcressa Road..

The existing business is operated throughout the main tourist season which runs from approximately the end of April until early October.

Over the years there has been a progression from visitors to the islands wishing to have self contained units rather than the traditional Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Whilst there will always be a requirement for the Bed and Breakfast service more and more visitors prefer the self contained units option.

The applicant has owned the B & B business for many years but due to the break up of her marriage and the increasing demands on her time to assist her disabled daughter she is finding managing and running the B & B far too demanding.

The 2020 season has made the applicant take a serious look at how she can run her business whilst also having to manage the welfare of her disabled daughter and herself within the COVID threat. The face to face contact has been a real issue for this business, both for the applicant and visitors, to the extent that the applicant feels that this is not a viable situation to put her and family through should this situation continue into the coming seasons.

The real threat of this virus has made the applicant take a long hard look at ways they can still stay operational as a tourist business yet operate in a different manor.

The reduction of the numbers of guests from 10 to 8 staying for a minimum of 7 nights (apposed to the 1-6 nights currently offered) will reduce her workload on the business, as the business will be self contained there will be little or no face to face interaction with the guests.

The applicant has had the property on the open market for the last 4 years, but unable to secure a sale.

POLICY WC5

This policy permits tourism development where it can be proved that

a) *make a positive contribution to the provision of high quality sustainable tourism on the islands*

This proposal creates four self contained units with kitchen and bathroom facilities all fitted out to a high standard, the units will also have a lounge and dining area which is an improvement on the current bedroom only with the shared lounge and breakfast/dining room. The proposal will also extend the current trading period from 6 months to 8 months, as the applicants will be able offer the accommodation from March through October, and longer should there be the demand.

In general the accommodation is an upgrade from the existing accommodation provided.

b) *located in sustainable and accessible locations*

The location is central to the main island of St. Mary's on the edge of Hugh Town on the main road within the islands, access to the dwelling is directly from the main high street leading to the Hugh Town, beaches, quay and other facilities.

c) *appropriate to the site and its surroundings in terms of activity, scaled design and*

d) *do not result on the impact on the environment or residential amenities, in accordance with the Local Plan*

The dwelling is a listed building from the C19 and is set within 5 similar dwellings and business, the proposed alterations to the dwelling are internal with no impact to the exterior of the dwelling, therefore the proposal will not impact the criteria of c) and d).

e) *in the case of conversions, do not result in the loss of homes that would otherwise be available for permanent occupation, unless there are wider public benefits demonstrated to offset the loss of permanently available homes.*

This proposal is creating dwellings, which will only be used for the purposes of holiday accommodation.

POLICY LC3 - BALANCED HOUSING STOCK

This policy requires new homes to be sustainable and offer a good standard of accommodation by being constructed in accordance with National Described Space Standards.

The Minimum gross internal space for a 2 bedroom single storey dwelling is 50m²

Although it could be justified that a Holiday Let doesn't need to be as big as a permanent residential dwelling, it still needs to be justified.

The proposal is to convert the 5 bedroom guesthouse with 10 guests into 4 x 2 person holiday lets.

The square meterage for each holiday let are

Unit 1 - 61m²

Unit 2 - 38m²

Unit 3 - 38m²

Unit 4 - 37m²

Although units 2,3 and 4 are below the NDSS for a single storey 2 person dwelling, this is to be a Holiday Let and it can be justified that the area is ample for the this use.

The majority of visitors to the islands visit the islands in order to explore the 5 inhabited islands, therefore would not be in the accommodation for the majority of their stay; the holiday unit will also be let on a weekly basis therefore the occupants would only be in the accommodation for a limited duration.

Currently other than when the guest are being served breakfast they remain in their rooms when at the Guest House, even though the applicant offers a shared lounge her guests seldom use this area; the average square meterage of the existing rooms is 14.5m², the new lets will be approximately 270% larger.

INFRASTRUCTURE

By the reduction of occupants in the dwelling (and the reduction in turn around of guests from nightly stays to a minimum of 7 nights) there will be a reduction on the general infrastructure requirements of the dwelling, reducing the use of water - electricity and creation of waste.

Each unit will be supplied with recycling bins along with normal waste bins, these will be collected by the applicants at the end of each week during the change over times, waste will then be collected by the local authority waste and recycling collection on the prescribed collection day.

There will not be an impact on the highways as all visitors will be pedestrian and that number will be halved currently using the business.