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Design & Access Statement

Hildrop – Store

Lower Town, St Martins



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Prepared by: Nathan Dean
BSc (Hons) MRICS



DUCHY of CORNWALL

Introduction

The proposal is to remove the hazardous glass roof and replace with cement profile sheets to match existing.

The outbuilding is due for decoration works and during an inspection several maintenance and repair items were detected. Carrying out maintenance on buildings with sheet glass roofs is difficult and hazardous to operatives yet regular maintenance is required to keep them in good repair and thus safe.

The glass currently used is not safety glass and is between 2mm and 4mm in thickness. The tops of the rafters need painting on a regular basis and to do this in a safety conscious way it is necessary to remove the glass panes to give access, which in itself is a hazardous process.



“...maintenance is difficult and hazardous...”

The Proposed Roof Replacement

The proposed roof line will follow closely that of the existing roof covering.

There may be a variation of up to 20mm from the existing roof line. The proposed roof covering will be cement profile sheeting to match the existing. Proprietary accessories will be used to close off the eaves and ridge in a similar way to the existing system.

The internal roofing structure will be renewed where required. The wall plates will largely be replaced on a like for like basis. It will be possible to revert to a glass roof covering in the future should there be demand for this type of use for the building.

By carrying out this work we are able to preserve the structure from further decay whilst being sympathetic to, and retaining evidence of, its previous use as a glass house.



The proposal will not affect access to the building.

Structural Issues

Inherent issues have allowed the structure to lean.

A large crack was discovered whilst clearing foliage between the eastern wall and the south elevation low wall. The asymmetrical profile of the timber structure comprising the glass roof and window walling has insufficient cross ties and bracing. The timber wall plate sits at different levels and therefore cannot be easily tied to complete the triangle. The timber structure has skewed eastwards. The eastern masonry wall is leaning outwards. To prevent further movement of the eastern wall the wall plate is to be renewed and tied into a new wall plate on the west elevation which is to be supported by masonry piers which will be built up in place of some of the windows. The timber structure will be renewed to the glazed area. The door on the south elevation will be lowered to enable the wall plate to be continuous. Additional structural sheathing to the gable end (covered in cladding) will offer further rigidity to the building.

Heritage

The proposed work will secure the historic structure through renewal of the more modern materials of the building.

This building is not the best example of a glass house and is overshadowed by modern structures.

The building is situated on St Martins in a conservation area. The building is orientated with the ridge running north to south and is south of the track which separates it from the original farmhouse complex. There is a series of small stone buildings to the west along with a modern timber clad double height garage which is perhaps the most imposing building of the setting. To the east are modern chalet holiday lets. Whilst the building is not listed it has been identified as one of two historic glass houses on St Martins. There are many glass houses found amongst the wider setting of the Islands and many of these fall in the curtilage of listed buildings. The best example is that found at Rocky Hill farm on St Mary's which is said to be:

“Easily the most complete and impressive example of its type on the Scillies. The flower industry, introduced to the islands by Augustus Smith as part of his mid C19 restructuring of the islands’ economy, became a vitally important part of the Scillies economy. The glasshouse features in the Gibson photographic collection of Victorian prints: it belonged to William Trevellick, reputed to have been the first Scillonian to have sent flowers (in a hatbox) to Covent Garden in 1867”

Glass houses are very much part of the story and heritage of Scilly in how they represent the flower farming industry, but as a historic building of itself it has very little merit. As many glass houses are, this glass house is poorly constructed with little thought to longevity. The fabric itself is not particularly historic apart from the lower masonry work. The timber structure and glass were last renewed in 2005. This example is, on balance, not an ideal structure to restore in its current format as the current best economic use would not sustain the levels of maintenance and renewal required to keep the building in good repair in a safe way.

This glass house is not amongst the earliest on Scilly, with glass house at Ashvale predating this particular glass house according to historic maps. Recent works to repair and restore the glass house in the grounds of Ashvale have been carried out and this has now a more local good example which can look to be retained and this is a more dominant position unobscured by surrounding modern buildings.

The proposed works will continue to form part of the story of the farmhouse and the dimensions and framework will still present the concept of a glass house. The proposed changes have occurred to many glasshouses around Scilly, for example, (Rocky Hill House on St Mary's) and preserve the building format and present the link with the flower farming history whilst adapting it for an appropriate economic use. This will ultimately assist in preserving the historic features of interest.