

Flood Map Planning presents a particular problem for this site and indeed the whole of the Isles of Scilly.

The IOS LPA approached the Environment Agency, On September 1st 2021, regarding planning application P21-045 made by Councillor Dougan for a plot known as Lawrences Brow St Martins. A response to the LPA Planning Officer Lisa Walton on the 21st September 2021 stated:

'We have the following comments from our engineer. The site is outside of the 1 in 200 flood extent with climate change and therefore would appear very low risk. It's on the sheltered side of St Martins so is unlikely to be impacted significantly by waves and as such the erosion extents are reasonably small as well. The SMP policy for all of St Martins is No Active Intervention for all epochs so the site is unlikely to ever be defended (at least from public funding) but given the low risk I doubt this would be a concern to the applicant.'

Bizarrely, on the 1st of September 2021, 20 days before the engineer report was sent to the LPA, the EA response was ended with the statement:

'If your Authority is minded to refuse any such applications on flood risk grounds please notify us. If refusal of permission is appealed by the applicant we would be happy to support you at appeal'

In response to the LPA request for flood assessment against planning application P21-075COU on the 3rd of November, a computer modeller for the EA stated:

' The site is shown to be in Flood Zone 1 in the current 1 in 200 year return period tidal flood which includes an allowance for wave action. However, when you factor in sea level rise as a result of climate change (including wave action) for 100 years lifetime, model outputs show that the site is at risk of flooding to depths of between 0.5m to 2m. This is quite a range of depths and it doesn't necessarily mean that the site will be affected by the maximum depth of 2m at the upper end of this range. Parts of the access/egress route are also likely to be flooded in this scenario'

'Our position would be that the proposal should be time limited to perhaps 25 years and a Flood Warning and Evacuation procedure implemented for users of the holiday accommodation'

So a mere 7 weeks after an EA engineer made the first, reassuring, report, a computer modeller has made a more significant input predicting drastic potential flooding within the next 25 years. This has the effect of negating the previous EA engineer's report and elevating the EA Zone 1 flooding, in Scilly, to Zone 2. Obviously, water finds its own level! Very reasonably, therefore, the LPA has used this report as a Material matter in dealing with the application P21-075COU, and imposed an acceptable time life of 25 years on the permitted development.

The magnitude of this Material planning decision is very significant, as it immediately affects 6 other businesses within St Martins, the whole of Old Grimsby and New Grimsby, The Flying Club, Stores and holiday Lets on Tresco, numerous businesses on St Agnes and Bryher, with devastating consequences for Hugh Town and those infrastructure services that would support new developments on St. Marys. Insurance considerations are enormous, as a consequence, as now this is a 'disclosed' factor.

Clearly, the advent of climate crisis is moving faster than we are led to believe, but in this application we are content to accept a 25 year limit as very reasonable under the circumstances. However, attached is an up to date assessment (23/11/21) from the Environment Agency, with Map pertaining, that still shows the site as in Zone 1 with low risk of flooding. Perhaps the LPA might seek clarity from the Environment Agency as to whether the engineers' or the computer modellers' advice should be followed. You will understand this is very confusing for the applicants.



Environment
Agency

Flood map for planning

Your reference

Location (easting/northing)

Created

Shepherds' Hu

91522/16062

23 Nov 2021 1:31

Your selected location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

This means:

- you don't need to do a flood risk assessment if your development is smaller than 1 hectare and not affected by other sources of flooding
- you may need to do a flood risk assessment if your development is larger than 1

hectare or affected by other sources of flooding or in an area with critical drainage problems

Notes

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. It doesn't include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments.

This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. The map is updated regularly and is correct at the time of printing.

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Flood map for planning

Your reference
Shepherds' Hu
 Location (easting/northing)
91522/16062

Scale
1:2500
 Created
23 Nov 2021 1:31

-  Selected point
 -  Flood zone 3
 -  Flood zone 3: areas benefiting from flood defences
 -  Flood zone 2
 -  Flood zone 1
 -  Flood defence
 -  Main river
 -  Flood storage area
- 
 0 20 40 60m