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THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
The champion for Victorian and Edwardian architecture

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Your reference: P/22/034/LBC
Our reference: 176167
6th June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: P/22/033/COU Change of use of a Grade 2 listed Town Hall & Museum to Museum & Cultural Centre (Sui Generis) for the Isles of Scilly including demolition of the existing modern boiler house provide space for the extension and reconfiguration of the existing 1970s extension including a new roof to accommodate new air source heat pumps. (Listed Building) The Town Hall The Parade Hugh Town St Mary's Isles Of Scilly TR21 0LP

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. It was discussed at the Society's Buildings Committee, a group of architects, historians, and heritage professionals. Considering their advice we make the following comments.

The Town Hall, built in 1889 by *J Goodfellow* is listed Grade II and forms one of the most imposing buildings within the low rise and architecturally simple character of Hugh Town's townscape. This is typified by the much lower buildings of a vernacular character which surround the Town Hall, which allow it to stand out as an impressive civic building, despite its relatively simple design.

It appears from the application documentation that the interior retains few features of interest and therefore we can accept the proposals to the interior of the Town Hall building. However, if any historical features survive these should be preserved.

We also accept the principle of extending the existing building. However, we are concerned by the design and scale of the proposed extensions. Most concerning is the extension on the site of the 1970s office block. This part of the proposals would be taller than the existing 1970s block, and taller than the Town Hall itself. This would harm the significance of the Town Hall, decreasing its assertiveness within the townscape as one of the most important buildings in the area. Similarly, the rear extension, although lower, remains very assertive. It extends beyond the line of the rear elevation of the Town Hall and its ridge height is almost equal to that of the Town Hall. This would harm the significance of the Town Hall due to its assertiveness. This is clearly demonstrated in the three-dimensional view from the southeast in which the extension appears very large and overbearing. Furthermore, it would overshadow the

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listed 18th century cottage beside the Town Hall, harming the setting of the listed building.

The Victorian Society understands that some exhibits require certain spaces within the museum, but any acceptable proposal must be on a smaller scale which is subservient to the existing Town Hall building in scale and design. No extension should extend higher than the existing ridge level, nor beyond the lines of the elevation.

The NPPF states the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets (para 190a) and that '*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.*' (para 206). These proposals would not guarantee this and must be revised so that they can accommodate the needs of the museum while preserving the special character of the Town Hall.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Connor McNeill

Conservation Adviser