

Proposed Staff Dwelling tied to Vineyard Business

St Martin's Vineyard

Design and Access Statement

Introduction

This application is for the construction of a staff dwelling to support the business known as St Martin's Vineyard and Winery on St Martin's, Isles of Scilly.

Planning Background and Relationship with P/19/060

Planning permission for a Staff Dwelling was granted under P/19/060 in 2019 and a material start on construction was made in October 2022. However in light of new information on Flood Risk based on Climate Change projections, works were paused at the initial ground works stage as the consented site is identified as being at risk of flooding during storm events which could jeopardise the long term viability of the dwelling.

Following exploration of alternative locations within the vineyard landholding taking into account access, visual impact, agricultural land use and context, an alternative location and design proposal for the staff dwelling has been developed with agreement and input from the land owners - the Duchy of Cornwall.

The current application is submitted with the understanding that, if the LPA is minded to approve, any consent granted would be conditional on a Unilateral Undertaking to restore the P/19/060 site to its prior condition and agree not to implement the previously consented permission. For the avoidance of doubt, the current application is intended to supersede and replace the existing consent.

The Need

The need for the staff dwelling was identified and accepted in the previous application (P/19/060). There are no open-market properties available on the island at the time of writing, and there are multiple island residents who are seeking long-term housing through the Duchy of Cornwall properties. The lack of housing on the islands is widely acknowledged - since the live application P/19/060 was submitted, the Council have declared a Housing Crisis on the islands in February 2022.

The need for a staff dwelling on the vineyard has been met to date by the yurt which was sited on the vineyard in March 2020 under Planning Application P/19/076. This remains suitable as a temporary measure whilst a staff dwelling is constructed, but does not reflect a long-term solution.

The Redline

The proposal is for a modest single-storey dwelling which occupies a space of 86sqm with an additional decking/pergola area covering a further 26sqm. The internal floorspace of the unit is 66sqm to ensure compliance with National Minimum Space requirements.

The larger redline footprint in the submitted application is to incorporate an Ecological Enhancement Area where species-poor bramble scrub will be enhanced to develop a more distinctive mixed-scrub habitat involving a range of native species; this will secure a 22% Biodiversity Net Gain. This is indicated clearly on the submitted plan SMV_L-1010_Proposed Site Plan.

- The proposal is for the erection of a staff dwelling on St Martin's Vineyard. This would be a small, single-storey residential unit of timber construction on a steel frame base. Excavation and permanent infrastructure requirements would be restricted to local pads with steel posts to support the frame.
- The application is designed to provide an affordable and comfortable long-term accommodation solution for the applicants who took on the Farm Business Tenancy in 2020 upon the retirement of the current owners. The previous owners continue to live in their existing family home on the island and there is a lack of alternative affordable open market housing or available rental properties which would provide appropriate housing for staff accommodation.
- The unit would measure 12.9m x 6.7m with an internal ceiling height of 3m and an external height to roof apex of 5.6m and would be constructed to conform to the definition of a Twin Unit Caravan as defined in the Caravan Sites Act 1968. The unit would be clad externally with natural finish timber boarding with a pitched, natural slate tiled roof. Insulation of walls, floor and ceiling would be to a high standard throughout with all windows and doors including double glazing. Access would be through a porch with further double-doors opening from the main living space to a decking area at the front. Windows would be situated on the front and rear of the building. Roof lights would be installed on the north-facing roof to provide further natural light into the unit. The decking area to the front would be a separate construction to the unit itself; a timber pergola would provide solar shading to south-facing windows. Rainwater would be collected from the roof and transferred to our existing high capacity rainwater storage system for use in irrigation on the vineyard. No other sealed surfaces are proposed.
- The internal accommodation would comprise an open-plan living area and kitchen; a bathroom and shower; and a bedroom. A porch would provide a connective space between outdoors and indoors and provide a storage area for outdoor clothing and workwear. Underfloor heating and an instant electric water heater would provide facilities. Water would be sourced from the existing borehole and pump/filtration system within the vineyard and power would be supplied through the existing three-phase vineyard connection. Foul and grey water would be disposed of using the existing septic tank which serves the vineyard, through a connection point adjacent to the winery – the existing system is capable of accommodating this capacity. A solar PV array and associated battery storage system was installed on the vineyard in 2021 allowing much of the power requirements of the staff dwelling to be renewably generated.
- The proposed site for the dwelling would be on an area of abandoned agricultural land which has developed into a species-poor bramble scrub over the last 25+ years.
- The proposed site would ensure that built development within the vineyard remains proximate to the existing vineyard buildings and infrastructure; whilst also ensuring that it is raised beyond the zone of flood risk. This provides a small degree of separation from the main business, ensuring privacy and space for the staff, whilst avoiding expanding the built footprint further than is required by the results of the FRA. The position is adjacent to existing polytunnels and other minor vineyard infrastructure including the pump shed.
- The site is very well screened from view by the land form and existing vegetation. Outside of the vineyard itself, visibility would be restricted to oblique glimpses between pittosporum trees along the sandy track which runs to the south of the vineyard over a stretch of approximately 60m. The site is not visible to any other dwellings or areas of publicly accessible land.
- Access to the dwelling would be via the existing vineyard gate and along a new track which would replace a single row of vines which are in poor condition due to wind exposure on the eastern extremity of the field. A Grass Support Mat would be laid to secure accessibility and structure year-round without introducing any new sealed surfaces.

Proposed Staff Dwelling - Visibility and Landscape Impact

VISIBILITY AND LANDSCAPE IMPACT



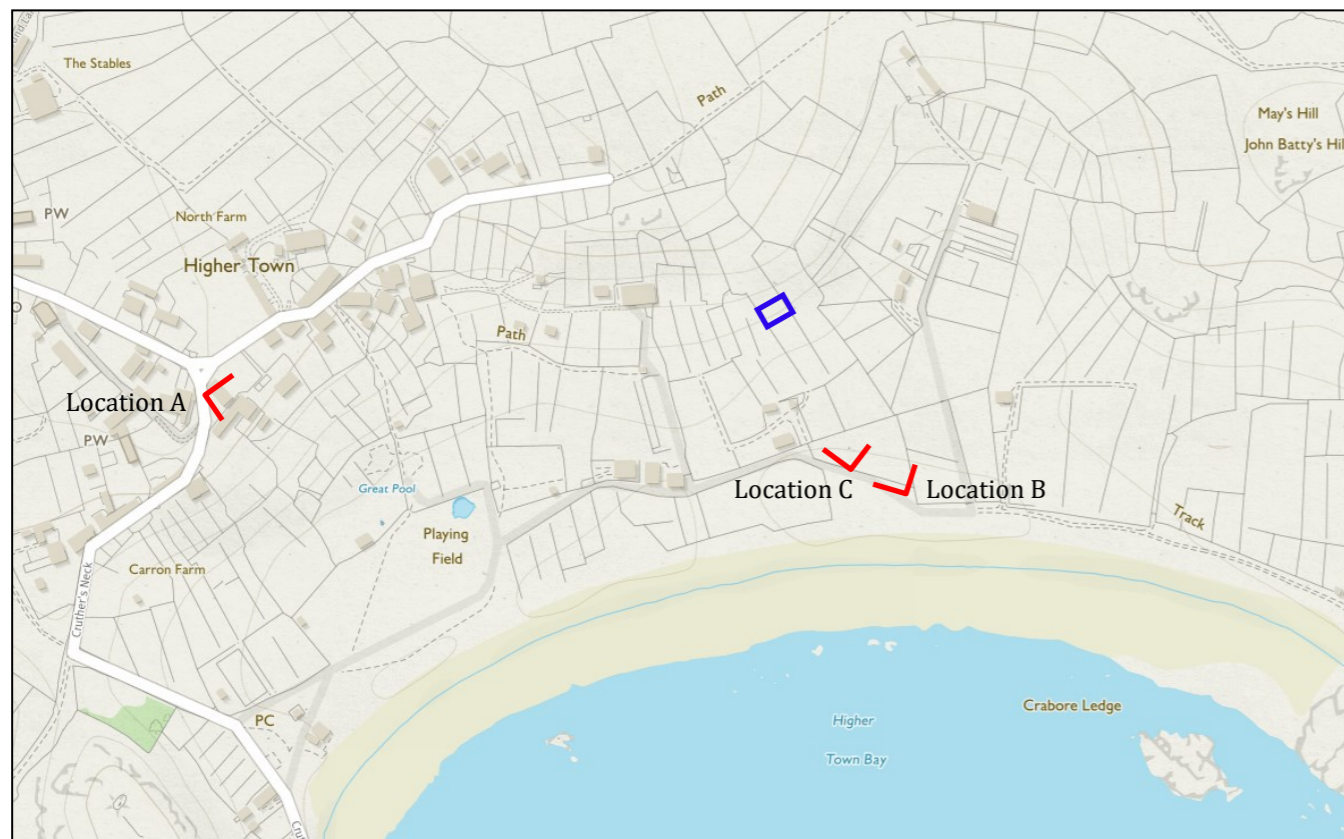
Location concealed by vegetation and land form

Photograph taken from the south-eastern edge of Higher Town (**Location A**) showing no visibility of the proposed location from the town due to screening by vegetation and land form.



Location concealed by pittosporum

Photograph taken from Location B showing the landform and intervening vegetation screening the location. This is illustrative of the comprehensive screening along the access track to the east of this location.



OS plan showing the locations of the three viewpoints along with the site indicated by the blue rectangle. The lie of the land, coupled with the pittosporum hedges, mean that no other viewpoints are considered necessary. The only additional visibility would be from within landholding of the vineyard itself, or potentially from adjacent agricultural fields which were not accessible to the public.

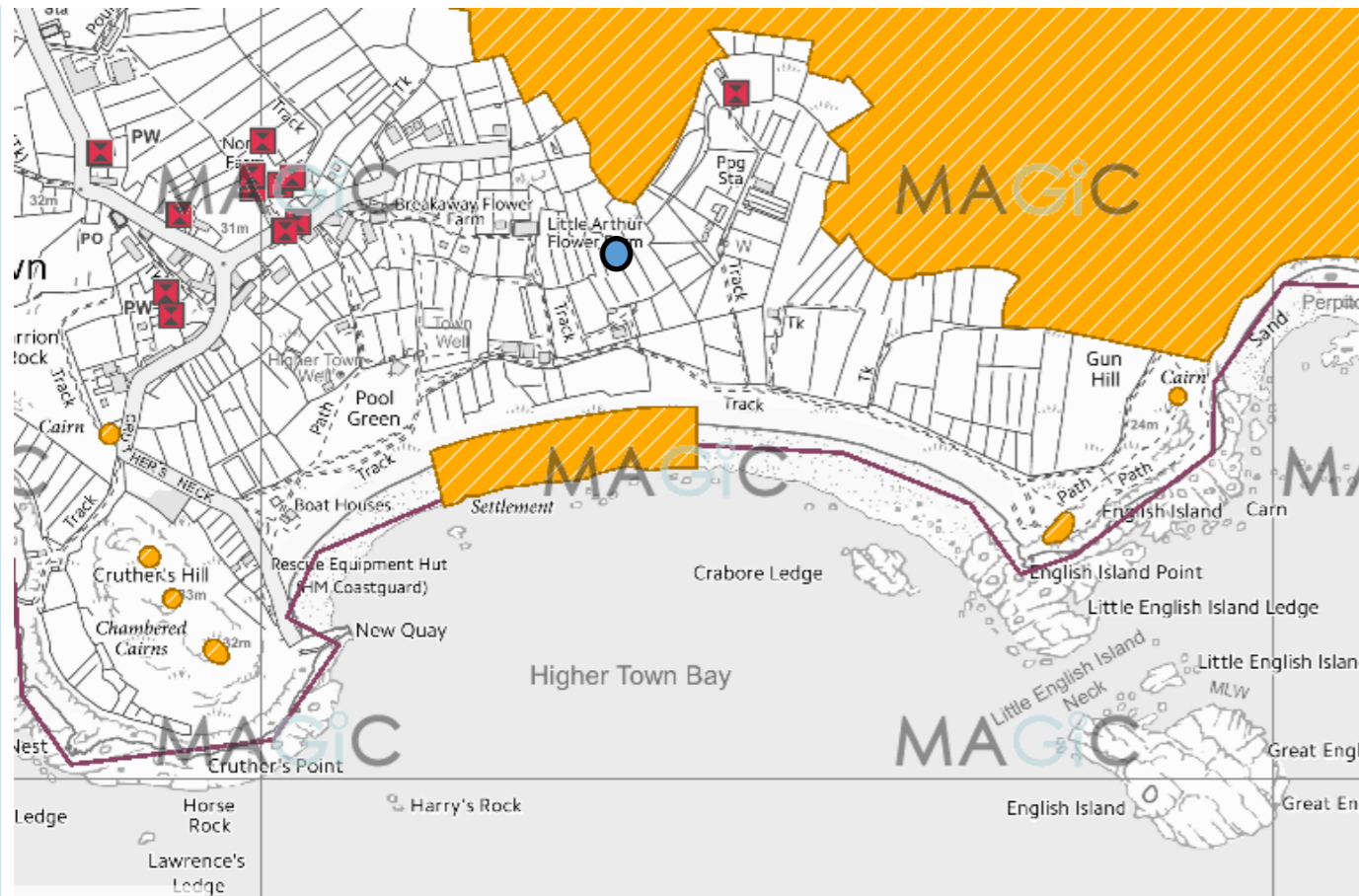


Proposed Site Location

Photograph showing the view from the track to the south (Location C) at the point where the dwelling would be most visible. This view is at 90 degrees to the direction of travel along the sandy track, and is glimpsed between intervening pittosporum shrubs. The visibility would be in the context of the shepherds hut visible in the image; and the location would be significantly softened by intervening and surrounding evergreen vegetation.

Proposed Staff Dwelling - Relevant Designations

RELEVANT DESIGNATIONS



Illustrating historic and heritage designations in the vicinity of the site taken from the MAGIC website. Orange hatching shows Scheduled Monuments whilst the red squares show Grade II Listed Buildings. The blue dot illustrates the proposed siting of the dwelling.

National Landscape (formerly AONB)

The Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - rebranded National Landscape in 2022 - is a designation which covers the whole of the Isles of Scilly. The Council's statutory duty is to produce and review a management plan for the AONB to demonstrate how the AONB can be protected and enhanced. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were created by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and, along with National Parks, they represent the finest examples of countryside in England and Wales. The Isles of Scilly were designated an AONB in 1975. Natural England states that:

'The primary purpose is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing this primary purpose, the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries, and of the economic and social needs of local communities, should be taken into account. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective, but the demand for recreation should be met in so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.'

Historic and Heritage Assets

The proposed site for the dwelling is not subject to any heritage or historic designations, however consideration of impacts upon these assets can include changes to the setting of the asset as well as direct impacts to the assets themselves.

- The Scheduled Monument "Prehistoric to Romano-British ritual, funerary and settlement remains on Par Beach, St Martin's" lies to the south;
- The Scheduled Monument "Prehistoric cairns, field system and settlements, medieval chapel and post-medieval daymark, lookout and signal station on north east St Martin's" lies to the north
- Three Scheduled Monuments "Prehistoric entrance grave, on Crutcher's Hill, St Martin's" lie to the south-west;
- The Scheduled Monument "Platform cairn on Crutcher's Neck, St Martin's" lies to the west;
- The Scheduled Monument "Prehistoric house platform settlement south west of English Island Carn, St Martin's" lies to the east;
- The Grade II Listed "Barn at Little Arthur's Farm" lies to the north-east;
- Various Grade II listed buildings are associated with Higher Town to the north-east including the Methodist Church, Corner Cottage, the Telephone Kiosk and Rock Cottage in closest proximity.

The siting and screening of the dwelling would not have any direct impact on the visual setting of any of the sites located.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other wildlife conservation designations

The proposed site for the dwelling is not itself subject to any wildlife or other conservation designations such as SSSI, SPA or SAC.

Such designations do exist in the local environs; these include St Martin's Sedimentary Shore SSSI to the west and Chapel Down SSSI to the north-east. Areas of the islands are also subject to higher level designations such as the Isles of Scilly RAMSAR and SPA sites.

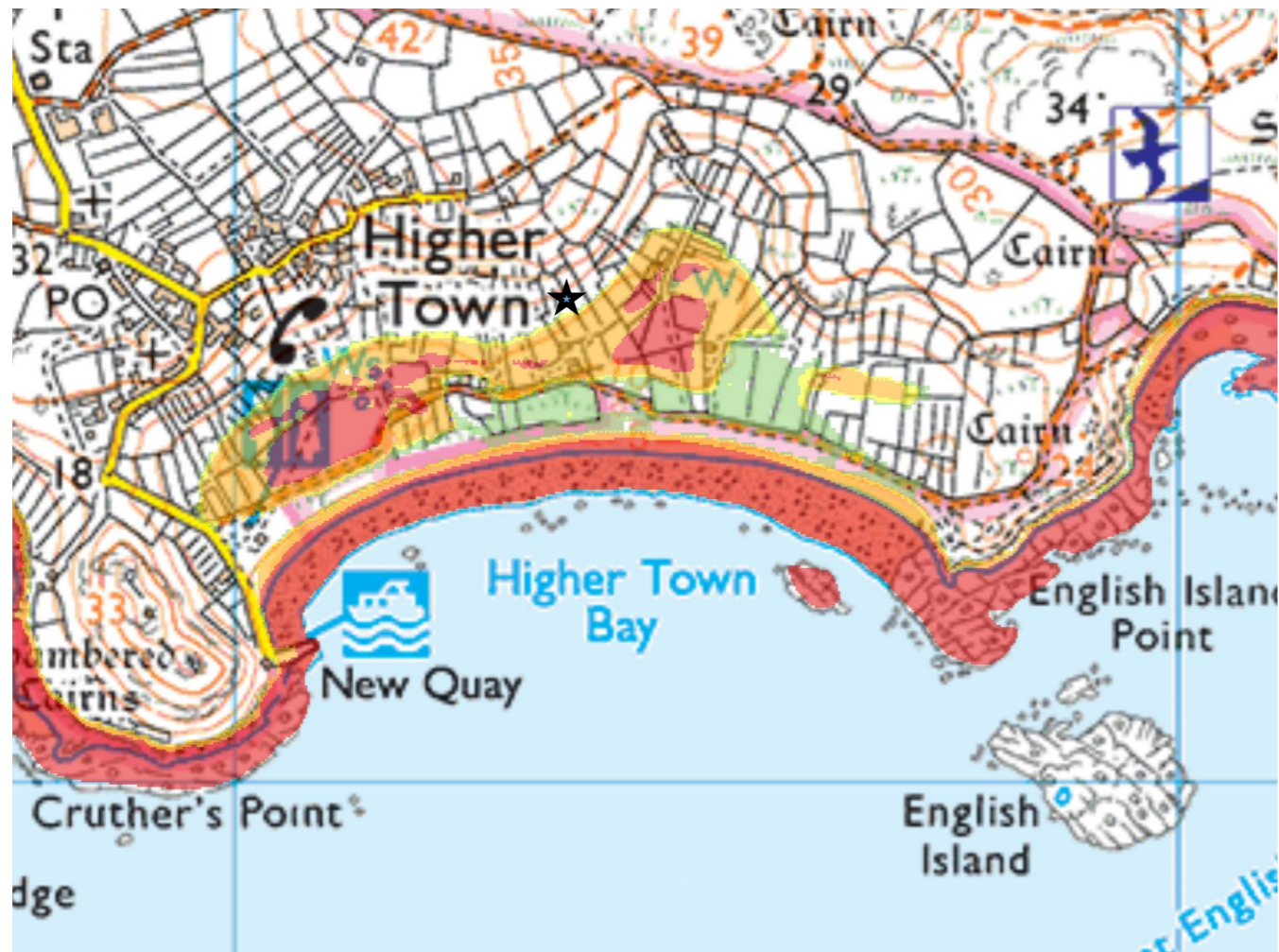
The proposals would not result in any direct impacts to these sites but further consideration is provided in the Ecological Assessment submitted in support of the application.

Conservation Area

In 1975 the whole of the Isles of Scilly was designated as a Conservation Area making it the only local authority area covered entirely by a single designation. This recognises the integration of the buildings and landscape in Scilly and how man has shaped the land over a long period. The Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and to protect features of special architectural or historic interest. Responsibility for conservation lies with the Planning Department of the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

Proposed Staff Dwelling - Flood Risk Assessment

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT



Extract from the 1:200 year + CC model provided in Product 4 by the EA. The location of the proposed staff dwelling lies on the hillside outside of all hazard zones and is indicated with the star on the above map.

Max Hazard.

(Flood Risk to People : FD2320)

	Less than 0.75 (Low Hazard)
	Between 0.75 and 1.25 (Danger for Some)
	Between 1.25 and 2.0 (Danger for Most)
	Greater than 2.0 (Danger for All)

Coastal Flood Risk

Given the size and nature of the building in question, the 1:200 year flood risk incorporating Climate Change modelling and incorporating the risk of sea defences being breached has been used as the key benchmark to identify a suitable location for the staff dwelling proposal on St Martin's Vineyard. An extract of this map is included to the left with the full map submitted in support of the application.

The key risk identified is associated with the dunes at Par Beach being breached and sea water filling the basin caused by the low lying land behind the dunes - the rough contours of this basin can be inferred from the map.

The positioning of the proposed dwelling is guided primarily by this consideration and the proposed location is sited outside of the Hazard Zones identified in the EA mapping whilst also avoiding land which is suitable for agriculture and viticulture.

Avoidance of coastal flood risk is therefore designed into the scheme. No other sources of flood risk are identified.



An aerial map of the redline boundary with the highest extent of the Hazard Zone drawn from the 1:200 year + CC Hazard Map shown for clarity - derived from the wider view map pictured to the left.

Proposed Staff Dwelling - Consideration of Proposals in the context of Emerging Local Plan Policy LC4

LOCAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Policy LC4

The key policy of relevance to these proposals is considered to be LC4 which relates to Staff Accommodation for Businesses. Consideration of each element of this policy has driven the design and layout of the proposals submitted in this application. The policy states that:

(1) New staff accommodation for businesses and organisations will be permitted where:

- a) an appraisal is submitted demonstrating that there is a functional and operational need for the proposed accommodation that cannot be met by existing suitable accommodation available in the area; and
- b) the size and type of the proposed accommodation is appropriate to the functional and operational needs of the business or organisation; and
- c) the proposed accommodation is located within or adjacent to the existing business, or well-related to the physical form of an existing settlement or group of existing buildings, or involves the re-use of an existing building.

(2) All staff accommodation permitted will be subject to occupancy restrictions. In addition to the above, seasonal staff accommodation will only be permitted where it:

- d) is located in an area that relates well to the business where possible, with the exception of the re-use of buildings; and
- e) does not cause harm to residential amenity through staff working unsociable hours.

(3) Where staff accommodation is required for a new business, the development will only be supported where it is demonstrated that the business is viable in the long term, supported by a business plan for a minimum of five years.

Response to Local Policy Requirements

With regards to requirement 1(a) - consideration of the functional and operational need for the proposed staff accommodation, with reference to the ability for this need to be met by existing suitable accommodation available in the area, is provided on the following page (Page 7) of this Design and Access Statement.

With regards to requirement 1(b) - it is considered that the size and scale of the proposed accommodation solution is appropriate to provide comfortable year-round accommodation for the applicants running the vineyard business.

With regards to requirement 1(c) - the proposed staff dwelling would be sited within the vineyard landholding and positioned such that built development within the vineyard remains focussed in a single area where the new dwelling would form a cohesive component of the existing vineyard infrastructure whilst accounting for new information on Flood Risk based on Climate Change models. This existing infrastructure includes the winery, the shop and tractor shed, the electric shed, and the holiday let units. The proposed dwelling would match the existing size, shape and massing of vineyard buildings already present in the vicinity whilst ensuring minimum National Minimum Space Standards are met.

As the proposed staff dwelling would provide year-round accommodation for the applicants, the criteria within Section 2 of this Policy relating to seasonal staff accommodation would not be applicable to these proposals. Similarly, Section 3 of this policy relates to a new business rather than the continuation of an ongoing business (the vineyard has been in operation since 1996) and therefore these criteria would not be applicable to these proposals.

APPRAISAL OF FUNCTIONAL & OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR STAFF DWELLING

- We (the applicants) took on the Farm Business Tenancy to run St Martin's Vineyard in 2020. The previously granted application (P/19/060) permitted the construction of a staff dwelling with reference to the current Local Plan Policy LC4.
- Although the previous owners of the vineyard retired, they continued to live in their family home on the island; therefore the availability of the business tenancy does not infer the availability of associated accommodation.
- It is essential for the running of the vineyard that the applicants are able to live on St Martin's. Since taking on the vineyard business in 2020, we have lived in a yurt which is situated on site in accordance with Planning Permission P/19/076 but this is a temporary solution whilst the staff accommodation is constructed. This represents a fundamental functional and operational requirement for some form of staff accommodation to be secured on the island.
- At the present time, there are no properties for sale on St Martin's and only a single property has been sold on the open market since 2019. Purchasing a property on the island in order to run the business, especially when considering the high cost of open market housing on the island, is not therefore an option.
- We also understand that there is currently a long waiting list for rental properties on St Martin's, with a number of high-priority applicants such as key workers on the island. We would therefore like to seek a solution for staff accommodation which would not affect existing housing stock and availability for island residents.
- Our solution is to erect a staff dwelling within the vineyard, tied through Planning Condition to the operation of the vineyard and appropriate to the needs of the business. This has been accepted in principle through the granting of the consent P/19/060.
- The Land Agent of the Duchy of Cornwall has confirmed that the Duchy, as the landlords, would support this proposal.
- In addition to the fundamental feasibility reasons outlined above, there are operational reasons why a dwelling on the vineyard would be desirable. We have constructed 2x holiday let units to support the vineyard business which are sited on the vineyard itself. It is important for the applicants to be able to live on the site in order to be able to meet the requirements of guests staying on the vineyard during the summer season, and to service the holiday accommodation.
- The vineyard is run on a regenerative system which excludes chemical treatments to control pathogens in favour of more holistic and organic approaches. This requires a high level of vine monitoring and vigilance for pest and fungal pathogens to permit a quick response time to deal with any outbreaks. It also requires pre-emptive measures such as canopy control at times when the weather and atmospheric conditions would indicate the likelihood of fungal outbreaks due to temperature, airflow and humidity conditions. The situation of the staff dwelling on the vineyard itself would be invaluable to allow the regular monitoring of the crops, and passive monitoring of site-specific microclimate conditions, to minimise the risk of crop damage/loss which could arise.
- Furthermore, the proposal for a dwelling tied to the vineyard business would also serve to secure the future of the vineyard. At the end of our tenancy or upon retirement, the business could subsequently be offered for potential new tenants as a going concern with a tied dwelling house. The vineyard makes an important contribution to the local food and produce sector, as well as providing a popular visitor attraction on St Martin's offering tours and tastings. Measures such as the provision of an associated staff dwelling which secure the long-term viability and sustainability of this business for the future would be of benefit to the island community and economy.

Proposed Staff Dwelling - Local Policy Considerations

LOCAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Policies relating to Scale and Ambition with regards to Setting and Existing Development Patterns

Policy SS2 supports development proposals which respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational treatment, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate any new buildings into their local setting. The policy also aims to protect both existing residents of adjacent properties and future occupants of proposed properties by requiring proposals to safeguard the amenity of existing occupiers and create a high quality environment for future occupiers that addresses issues of privacy, overlooking, overshadowing and/or any overbearing impacts. **Policy OE1** supports this, stating that development will only be permitted where they would not cause significant harm to the character, quality, distinctiveness or sensitivity of the landscape. **Policy OE3** requires the design and location of new development to take into account the form, scale, size and massing of nearby buildings, together with materials of construction.

Response to Local Policy Requirements

The scale and ambition of the dwelling would be modest - it would form an adjunct to the existing group of buildings which constitutes the vineyard. It would not therefore represent a significant extension of the existing development line, nor represent a novel component within the landscape. Rather it would represent an addition to the existing assemblage and, as it would be tied to the vineyard, it would form an intrinsic component of the agricultural business.

In terms of size - the dwelling proposed is considered to be the minimum required to provide comfortable long-term accommodation for two people. The proposed dwelling would have an internal footprint of 66sqm.

The proposed style of build is appropriate to a residential dwelling within an agricultural setting. The Land Agent at the Duchy of Cornwall has inspected these proposals and, following input to refinement of style and design, is happy that the proposals are appropriate to the site.

The proposed location would not impact upon any adjacent residential or business properties in terms of amenity or issues of privacy; the setting would also remain appropriate for future occupiers if the vineyard business and tied property were taken on by new owners.

Policies relating to Water Use and Management

Policy SS2 supports proposals which reduce pressure on water resources and increase reuse by incorporating effective water management measures, including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, green roofs and water conservation, efficiency and rain and grey water harvesting measures. **Policy SS6** further supports measures such as rainwater harvesting.

Response to Local Policy Requirements

The dwelling would have rainwater harvesting built into the design with runoff collected and stored in the existing 43,000L capacity of storage on the vineyard.

Policies relating to the use of Natural Materials

Policy SS2 supports the use of natural, sustainable materials and styles that compliment those found in the local area; requires new builds to match the style, character, size etc. of their environment; requires new builds to respect the character of the site; and promotes the use of locally sourced, recycled or low carbon materials in construction where they are available and represent a viable option.

Response to Local Policy Requirements

The design would maximise the use of natural materials such as timber and slate with glass elements to ensure that the dwelling has a natural feel which would fit well into the existing landscape and be in-keeping with the vineyard which would remain the primary function of the land. With regards to Policy SS2 therefore, the environment is considered to be the vineyard primarily with residential dwelling on St Martin's more generally as the wider environment.

Policies relating to Land Use

Policy SS1 requires proposals to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, whilst **Policy SS2** encourages the efficient use of the land whilst respecting the character of the site.

Response to Local Policy Requirements

The proposed siting is in an area of historically used agricultural land which was abandoned when the vineyard was established and is not considered suitable for growing vines due to the gradient and topography. The removal of a single row of vines to secure access is specifically targeted to a location where the vines do not perform well due to distance from the westerly boundary hedgerow and exposure to prevailing winds.

Policies relating to Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy SS1 requires the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, whilst **Policy SS2** focuses on respecting and reinforcement of the area's character and identity. **Policy OE1** states that development should not cause significant harm to the character, quality, distinctiveness or sensitivity of the landscape, or to important features or views, or other perceptual qualities such as tranquillity and dark skies; This is supported further by **Policy OE3** which reiterates the status of all of the islands as a Conservation Area and states that proposals must conserve and enhance the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting.

Response to Local Policy Requirements

The assessment presented in this DAS demonstrates that the setting will have negligible visual impact outside of the vineyard landholding itself where it will form an integral and cohesive component of the existing buildings and business.

Proposed Staff Dwelling - Further Considerations with regards Validation Checklist

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Wildlife Survey and Report

An Ecological Assessment; Biodiversity Net Gain; and Ecological Enhancement Strategy has been produced and submitted alongside this application to secure a 22% net gain whilst avoiding impacts to protected species.

Landscaping

The development does not include any formal landscaping; rather those areas which are not occupied by the dwelling or the decking would be managed either as grassland or as an enhanced mixed scrub habitat.

This final landscaping is detailed in Figure 02 of the Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecology report. No further landscaping is proposed.

Infrastructure Impact Assessment

The vineyard has an existing electricity supply provided by Western Power—there is a three-phase connection of which only one phase is currently in use. We have also installed a 6.8 kWh PV array and 10 kWh battery storage on the vineyard and this would ensure that the majority of the energy requirements of the staff dwelling is served by renewables.

The existing borehole on the vineyard has sufficient capacity to supply water to the dwelling. The existing UV and filtration system is sufficient to ensure the quality of this water supply.

The vineyard has an existing septic tank and soakaway system which is over-specified for the current requirements of the site. This system has sufficient capacity to manage the foul and grey water arisings from the proposed Staff Dwelling. A connection point to the existing system adjacent to the Winery would be used.

There are no sealed surfaces proposed aside from the building itself, and runoff from the roof would be collected and pumped to existing storage tanks on the vineyard.

Fire Safety

A Fire Statement illustrating access and stored water sources is submitted alongside this application.

Tree Survey

No removal of trees, shrubs or hedges is required in order to facilitate the construction either associated with the footprint of the dwelling and decking or the access requirements.

There are 3x outgrown non-native karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*) shrubs on the eastern site boundary - the largest of these has a DBH of 20cm equating to an Root Protection Area (RPA) of 2.44m. The 2m standoff from this eastern boundary (see the Proposed Site Plan accompanying this application) means that the incursion into the RPA of this largest and most proximate outgrown karo shrub is 4.6%. This would ensure that encroachment into the RPA is <10% which accords with BS:5837 (2012) requirements.

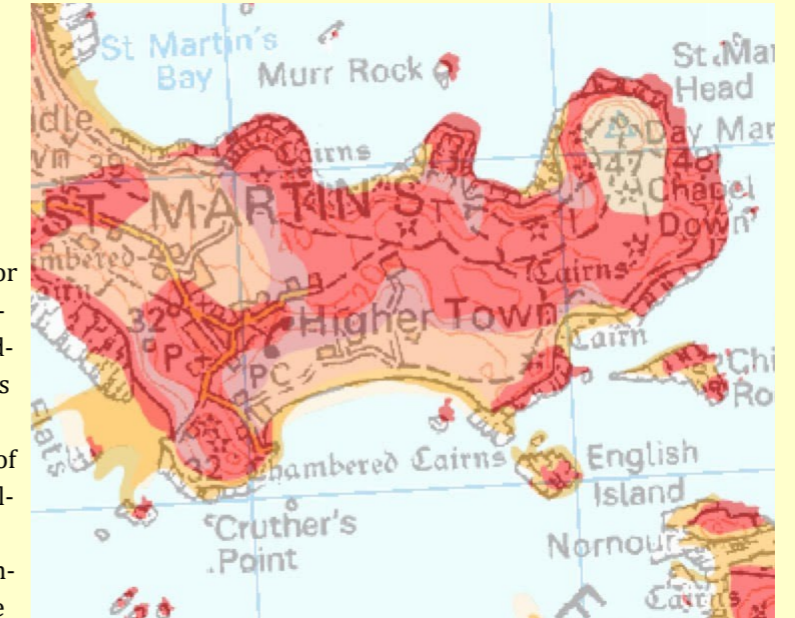
The proposed ground works are restricted to excavation of local concrete pads to support steel posts; therefore minimal ground works within the RPA are proposed.

The shrubs would be pruned back where required to allow their retention.

Archaeological Assessment

The previous application was approved with agreement (following discussion with CAU) that no further archaeological assessment would be required for this site on the basis of the following considerations:

- 1) The level of excavation proposed is restricted to a shallow raft foundation which represents a minimal excavation or impact.
- 2) The staff dwelling at the adjacent business (Planning Application P-18-080) was constructed without requirement for archaeological conditions due to the evidence presented by the applicant regarding the ground conditions. Their site was on blown sand which is (see map inset) the same superficial geology as the site of the previous application for a staff dwelling on the vineyard. The Cornwall Archaeology Unit (CAU) subsequently withdrew their request stating that there are "unlikely to be any archaeological remains here due to the depth of blown sand and the limited depth of the foundation level".



The current proposal is slightly higher on the vineyard and the superficial deposits are identified on BGS maps as "Head - Clay, silt, sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period". This matches preliminary ground assessments undertaken by the applicants.

The proposed ground works remain minimal - with excavation restricted to the installation of local concrete pads to support steel posts. However if the change in substrate necessitates a revision of the archaeological risk, we would be happy to follow advice from CAU on whether further measures such as a watching brief would be appropriate for this development.

Lighting Assessment

The proposals would not involve exterior lighting.

It is not therefore considered that further lighting assessment would be required for this application.

Site Waste Management

A separate SWMP is included as part of this submission.

Waste arisings from the occupation of the dwelling would be collected alongside the vineyard collection. This would avoid the need for additional kerbside collection points associated with the dwelling.