

**Alterations to
Guthers, Church Road
Hugh Town, St.Mary's
Isles of Scilly, TR21 0NA
for
Mike and Karrie Skaife**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

August 2024

Background

Mike and Karrie Skaife have recently purchased Guthers, a dormer bungalow set back from Church Street in Hugh Town, St.Mary's. They have relocated from another property on St.Mary's, and Guthers will become their new permanent home. The previous owner was an elderly lady who enjoyed living in this impressive location with garden views overlooking Lower Moors, but she was unable to devote time and effort to ongoing maintenance. There is therefore a long list of improvements and alterations the new owners would like to undertake to tailor the house to suit their own needs. The Council have already been consulted on these planned changes and have provided useful feedback in the form of a pre-app report. This advice has helped to inform the current planning application proposals. This document explains to proposed regeneration of Guthers and should be read in conjunction with drawings 2045-P01 to P05 inclusive.



Above: View of Guthers from the private garden on the NE side of the property

Existing Property / Design Brief

Guthers is typical of many 50's buildings and now looks its age! External walls are finished in natural smooth sand:cement render and have a rather drab appearance. Fortunately, the building appears to be very built and there are no obvious signs of settlement or cracking. The gabled pitched roof is clad with timber shingles, matching adjacent properties. This type of roofing was popular at the time but is seldom used today due to fire risks and poor durability. There are currently leaks around the chimney stack that need attending to. Windows are either white plastic at the front or standard wooden casement windows at the sides and rear. All of them are in need of replacement. Internally, there is access to the first floor up a steep non-compliant timber ladder. The landing at the top is also unprotected.



Side view looking back towards Guthers

The bungalow sits at the front of a 0.12 hectare plot incorporating a large sloping garden at the rear. Pathways run around the property and there is a small terrace behind the boundary hedge close to the front door. Drains run down the approach drive to Church Road serving the kitchen and bathroom / WC on the SW side of the property.

Guthers is in a prominent location at the end of the access lane but is partly obscured by some established shrubs and a roughly constructed stone hedge (see photo above). It is one of a number of similar properties that appear to have been built around the same time. The most notable is Lowenva on the North side of the drive, more commonly known as Harold Wilson's bungalow. This property is also rather outdated and the owners intend to extend and alter it to meet current expectations and regulations (see planning approval P/23/031/HH). The immediate neighbourhood will therefore hopefully experience something of a regeneration in the near future.



Extract from the Sibleys website illustrating Guthers

Mike and Karrie Skaife would like to make a number of changes and improvements to their new home which can be summarised as follows:

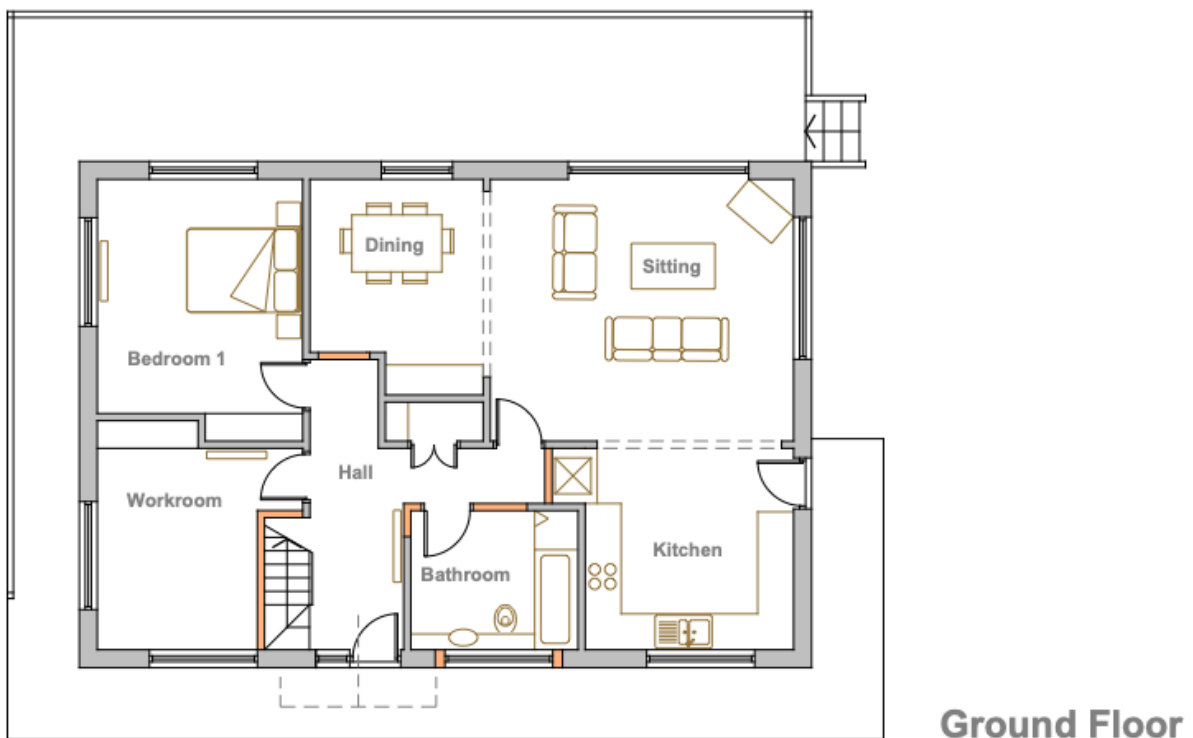
- **Bedroom Accommodation:** The current layout provides up to six bedrooms – depending on the designation of rooms – sharing a rather compact bathroom. Mike and Karrie only require three bedrooms plus a workroom
- **Bathroom Accommodation:** The ground floor bathroom and adjacent toilet can be improved by combining both rooms and absorbing part of the hallway to provide a more spacious room. Upstairs a second shared bathroom will significantly improve the facilities in the house
- **Access:** The dangerous access ladder to the first floor must be replaced as soon as possible with a building regulations compliant staircase
- **Windows and Entrance Doors:** All are outdated and must be replaced
- **Open-Plan Living:** The sitting / dining / kitchen spaces will be dramatically improved if internal partitions are removed to open up the living space. The whole area will then benefit from extra daylight and the best views from the property towards Porthmellon and Tresco
- **Improved Entrance:** A new glazed door with side glazed screen will allow more daylight into the entrance hall. A projecting roof canopy will provide shelter from the elements when entering the house and will also clearly identify the front door
- **Roof:** The timber shingles are to be replaced with natural dry-laid slate
- **Chimney:** This has become redundant and is a source of leaks around the flashings so is to be removed
- **Dormer Window:** The off-set rather unsightly existing dormer is in a very prominent location looking back at Guthers from the garden or valley below. A centralised dormer with gables over the bedroom windows will significantly improve the garden elevation
- **Outdoor terrace:** A timber deck linked to the sitting room with a new sliding patio door will connect the inside of Guthers to the outside space. Steps down from the deck will improve access to the garden and encourage healthy outdoor living

B. Amount

Guthers currently provides 91.12m² of accommodation at ground floor and 52.96m² as room-in-the-roof space at first floor. This represents a total internal floor area of just over 144m². As there are no changes to the footprint there is no significant increase in the size of the property. The re-modelled dormer window will add a small amount of space to the first floor but the change will be minimal. The pre-app report confirms that the policy limiting extensions to the minimum space standards does not apply to this householder application.

C. Layout

A number of changes and improvements are proposed to the interior of the property. Although these do not necessarily require planning approval, they are shown on the planning drawings. New structure has been coloured orange so changes can be seen at a glance (see plan below). At ground floor level, the removal of two internal partitions will create a much more practical and attractive living space. The toilet and bathroom have been combined into one larger room with enough space for a bath and shower. Another major improvement will be the introduction of a new staircase serving the first floor. This encroaches on the existing front bedroom which will become a workroom for Karrie. Upstairs, the attic rooms will be changed from three potential bedrooms into two bedrooms plus a shared bathroom.



D. Scale

As the footprint is not being increased and the height of the roof is not being raised, there is no change to the scale of the building. In fact, the cladding of the two gables and decoration of the external walls will reduce the apparent bulk of the two end elevations and expanse of unpainted render.

E. Landscaping

Mike and Karrie are looking forward to tackling the garden and either pruning or removing some of the overgrown shrubs. The main proposed change, however, will be the construction of a

timber deck at the back of the house extending 2.5m into the garden. This will be one step down from the internal finished floor level and three steps above the garden at the South East end of the terrace. The decking will be constructed in treated non-slip timber to match the timber balustrading. Stainless steel tension cables will be a neat and effective way of making the handrails safe and secure and will preserve the view from the living rooms and terrace.



Proposed style of timber balustrading

F. Appearance

A key design brief target is to improve the overall appearance of Guthers. The property is prominent from Porthmellon and the improvements to the roof will be visible from this direction. The change in cladding from timber shingles to natural slate will give the property a more robust, traditional feel. The twin roof dormers to the first-floor bedrooms (see below) are to be symmetrically arranged around the central axis of the property to create a more balanced appearance. The pitched dormers will be infilled with a flat roofed section with a centrally positioned obscure glazed bathroom window set very slightly back from the main dormers. On the roadside elevation, the gabled roof canopy will provide shelter and a focal point clearly identifying the front door. Roof-windows above the porch align with the ridge and will provide welcome natural light on the landing. All of the windows and external doors will be replaced with white double glazed Upvc units. The gable cladding will be a softer treatment than the oppressive expanse of render, punctuated with new gable windows on either end. The remainder of the external walls will be painted with white masonry paint to complete the facelift.



Rear (NE) Elevation



Side (SE) Elevation

Impact on Neighbours / Consultation

Before the application is submitted, Mike and Karrie will approach their immediate neighbours. However, the external changes are of a minor nature so there should be no detrimental impact. Hopefully the re-roofing will be considered an improvement and the general refurbishment will be welcomed. As mentioned above, the planning department have already been consulted and

their views have been taken into account. For example, a Preliminary Roost Assessment has already been carried out by James Faulconbridge and no bats, nesting birds or protected wildlife have been found.

Access

Karrie Skaife has had four hip replacements and suffers from osteo-arthritis so creating a home that addresses future health and mobility issues is a high priority. Accessibility is being improved in a variety of ways. Externally, the entrance to Guthers from the approach lane will become more legible with a clearly visible front door and wider pathways. The garden is also becoming more accessible from the living space via generous patio doors onto the outdoor terrace.

Internally the opening up of the living area will make circulation easier and wheelchair friendly. A safe staircase leading to the first floor will be a significant improvement. Improvements to glazing will increase internal daylight levels benefiting any occupant who is visually impaired. Small restricted spaces, such as the current downstairs toilet and first floor small bedroom, are being 'designed out' thereby improving living conditions.

Sustainability

There is an opportunity to improve the thermal performance of Guthers here by utilising green technologies, selecting the right building materials and building in a sensitive manner. The following sustainable 'gains' have been adopted in the design project:

- **High Levels of Insulation:** Where elements of the building are being upgraded, construction will conform with the new 2022 Building Regulations. These require much higher insulation standards. For example, when the roof is re-clad, new insulation will be inserted into the roof construction between and below the rafters
- **Cedar Cladding:** The gable walls and dormers will be clad with sustainably sourced cedar cladding. This pays homage to the original timber roof shingles on Guthers and surrounding properties. It is a natural building material that does not require treatment. If carefully detailed it will weather well and will mellow into a silver / grey shade in time
- **Water harvesting:** Roof water will be harvested in a number of water butts and used for watering the garden, cleaning, etc
- **Windows:** New windows will be white Upvc double glazed units, suitable for a marine environment
- **Considerate Construction:** Mike and Karrie are very keen to ensure that the construction process minimises any disruption for neighbours or the local community. There is space on site for storage of materials so these will not be left on a public highway. A Construction Management Plan will be prepared to control working hours, noise levels, waste control, etc. A Planning Condition to agree a mutually acceptable plan is welcomed

The proposed designs will conform with the latest version of the building regulations that place a high priority on energy conservation, accessibility and high standards of construction.

Summary

Guthers is clearly a property with great potential for improvement. The applicants want to embrace this challenge and carry out as many of the improvements as possible within the constraints of their allocated budget. They have already commissioned an architect and structural engineer to help to steer them through the project and are in discussion with a local building contractor.

They are encouraged by the results of the pre-app planning enquiry that indicate that this should be a non-contentious householder planning application. The bat survey (PRA) has already been carried out and two further bat emergence surveys are underway. These will be completed during the planning application process. Other planning requirements, such as a Waste Management Plan, can hopefully be dealt with by planning condition. If any other queries arise during the application period, the applicants or their agent will do their best to deal with them.



Above: View from Guthers towards Porthmellon and Tresco in the distance

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