

Council of the Isles of Scilly Planning Application

Ref: P/25/008/FUL

Consultation Response

Date: 13.02.2025

Ref: P/25/008/FUL

Site: South West Water Pumping Station, Little Porth, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposal: Redevelopment of the Bishop and Wolf Sewage Pumping Station, including the construction of an enlarged wastewater infrastructure building and temporary construction compound on land at Parsons Field (Affecting the setting of a Listed Building)

Consultee Name: Vic Robinson – Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment), Cornwall Council

The site

The site is within the Conservation Area and is surrounded by buildings, including the Bishop and Wolf public house (approx. 15m to the northeast), which was grade II listed in 1992.

The Bishop and Wolf public house was originally constructed as a house and is one of the earliest surviving houses on the islands, the building was reportedly constructed in c. 1700 for Thomas Ekins, the first land agent of the Godolphin Estate. The HER record for the building states that the original building was damaged by a storm surge in 1744 and was replaced with the current house in the mid-18th century.

The significance of the listed building derives from its historic value as an early surviving example of 18th-century architecture on Scilly, and its evidential value through its surviving historic fabric and architectural features.

The rear setting of the listed building has been impacted by piecemeal alterations and development during the 20th century. The present-day yard arrangement bears little resemblance to the layout shown on the historic maps, as such its integrity is somewhat eroded.

The existing pumping station building is relatively modest and measures 3.90m long x 2.96m wide x 4.44m tall, there is also an existing vent 8.86m stack. The building is of block construction and reportedly dates from the 1930's. It sits within a small, enclosed yard which is enclosed to the south, west and north by low concrete block walls and to the east by a stone

Council of the Isles of Scilly

Planning Application

Ref: P/25/008/FUL

wall, which appears to have two phases of construction. The applicants HIA suggests the wall postdates 1908 as it does not appear within historic mapping and neither phases of wall appear to correlate with the structures visible in aerial photography from 1938.

As such, the historic significance of the wall is likely to be low, that said it is constructed of locally distinctive materials that assimilate well within its historic context, traditionally constructed stone walls contribute to the special character of the Conservation Area.

Statutory Duty, Policy and Guidance

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Part 1 s.72(2) requires the LPA to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

When assessing proposed changes to heritage assets the NPPF part 16 requires that 'great weight' should be given to the objective of conserving designated heritage assets and they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be [p 212]. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification [p 213].

Additionally, LPA's should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance [p.219].

Policy OE7 of the Isles of Scilly Local Plan, adopted in 2021, reinforces that any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified and that proposals causing harm will be weighed against the substantial public, not private, benefits of the proposal. Also, that it should be demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset.

Advice

Permission is sought for the construction of an enlarged wastewater infrastructure building, which will replace the existing Bishop and Wolf pumping station building. This is said to be needed to accommodate essential infrastructure equipment necessary for the maintenance and upgrade of the wastewater infrastructure.

Council of the Isles of Scilly Planning Application

Ref: P/25/008/FUL

The new pumping station and screening building would have a pitched slate roof and measure 12.0m long x 6.3m wide x 4.9m tall. The proposed development will slightly encroach into the rear curtilage of grade II listed pub, but is largely discretely located.

The development will involve the removal of the 2-phase stone boundary wall currently separating the existing pumping station site from a rear yard area to the south of the pub. The HIA suggests the phase to the north appears to be the earliest and is of roughly coursed rubble construction. There is some uncertainty in the submission whether this section is to be retained. The proposed site plan and visuals show this section retained but the proposed ground floor and roof plan does not?

It would be desirable to retain this section of wall and for it to be protected during the construction works.

The applicants HIA concludes that the scheme will result in a neutral change, which will not be perceptible considering the Conservation Area as a whole and would have no impact on its significance, and no impact to the significance of the Bishop and Wolf Public House via change to its setting.

We concur with this assessment subject to the above clarification but would emphasise that the quality of materials and details will be important in securing a building that respects the very high quality of built historic environment found in the Conservation Area. As such, it is recommended that if approval is granted the following be secured by condition;

- Details for the proposed gate, doors and window
- Details of the proposed roof slate, type of fixing and ridge tile
- Details for the proposed rainwater goods

Name: Vic Robinson – Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment), Cornwall Council

Date: 4th March 2025
