



PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF BI-FOLD DOORS TO THE SPA BUILDING at

Karma St Martin's Hotel, Lower Town, St Martin's, TR25 0QW

**PREPARED BY
FIONA JONES BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

January 2026



Chartered Town Planner
Royal Town Planning Institute

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the installation of bi-fold doors to the spa building within the grounds of the Karma St Martin's hotel complex, located on St Martin's, Isles of Scilly ("the Site").
- 1.2 The Isles of Scilly are designated as a Conservation Area. Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) advises that when development affecting a heritage asset is proposed (including development within a Conservation Area), the local planning authority should require the applicant to demonstrate that they have considered the impact of their proposals on the significance of the asset. This assessment should be set out in a Heritage Statement.
- 1.3 This document is therefore submitted as a combined Planning and Heritage Statement in support of the proposed development. The statement describes the proposal, summarises the relevant planning policy framework, and assesses the heritage and design implications of the works.
- 1.4 The proposal is modest in scale and relates only to alterations to fenestration. No extension, increase in footprint, or change to the overall scale and massing of the building is proposed.
- 1.5 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This statement demonstrates that the proposed development preserves the character and appearance of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area and complies with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan and national policy.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site forms part of the Karma St Martin's hotel complex located at Lower Town, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly. The location of the works is shown edged red on the submitted block plan.

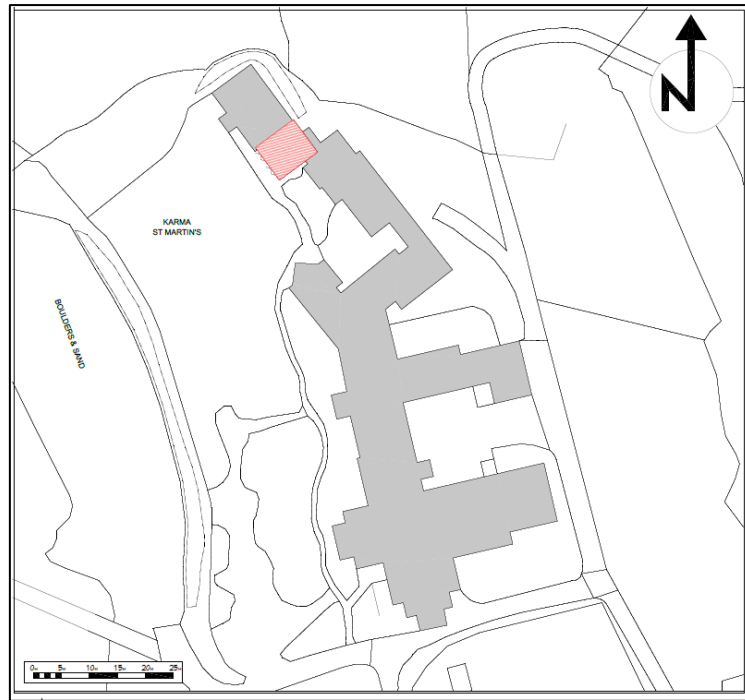


Figure 1: Proposed Site Plan

- 2.2 The hotel complex comprises a collection of buildings and associated facilities set within landscaped grounds. The immediate setting includes areas of garden and established greenery, with buildings arranged within the wider hotel site.
- 2.3 The proposed works relate to a small part of the existing hotel complex. The bi-fold doors are proposed on the front elevation of the relevant building, which faces towards the landscaped garden area within the hotel grounds.
- 2.4 The wider area is characterised by the distinctive island settlement pattern and the sensitive coastal landscape setting of St Martin's. Development in the locality generally comprises small-scale buildings within a landscape-led environment.
- 2.5 The site lies within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area.

Site Photos



Existing front elevation



Existing side elevation



Existing building material where new doors are proposed

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The Council's planning history record confirms that planning permission was originally granted in 1987 for the erection of a 24-bedroom hotel at the site (refs P.2560 and P.2635).
- 3.2 Subsequent permissions have been granted for amendments and associated development within the hotel complex, including the relocation of the swimming pool and pavilion (ref P.2837, 1988), and various operational/supporting works overtime.
- 3.3 More recently, permission was granted to remodel the hotel under ref P/10/034 (2010), which was renewed under ref P/13/015 (2013).
- 3.4 The planning history also records some refused applications, including proposals for further development and the seasonal siting of glamping tents (ref P/18/051, 2018)

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application seeks planning permission for the installation of bi-fold doors to a spa building within the grounds of the Karma hotel complex. This follows the re-configuration of the internal space to remove 2no. bedrooms and thus extend the spa offering.

- 4.2 The proposed bi-fold doors are located on the front elevation of the host building, facing towards the landscaped garden area within the hotel grounds, as shown on the submitted drawings.
- 4.3 The proposal involves the alteration of the existing fenestration arrangement to accommodate the new bi-fold door opening. The extent of works is limited to this elevation and no other external alterations form part of the proposal.
- 4.5 No changes are proposed to the overall footprint, height, or roof form of the building. The internal re-organisation does not amount to development requiring planning permission.
- 4.6 The proposed bi-fold doors will be made of brushed aluminium.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

Statutory Duties

- 5.1 In assessing proposals within conservation areas, decision-makers must have regard to the statutory duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- Section 72(1) requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 5.2 These duties are a starting point for decision-making and must be balanced against other material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

- 5.3 The NPPF sets out the Government's overarching planning policies. Relevant paragraphs include:
- Paragraph 208 – requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the significance of heritage assets potentially affected by a proposal, and to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation and development.
 - Paragraph 212 – requires that great weight be given to the conservation of heritage assets, with the level of weight increasing with the importance of the asset.

- Paragraph 215 – confirms that where development proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Isles of Scilly Local Plan (2021)

- SS1 – Principles of Sustainable Development
- SS2 – Sustainable Quality Design and Place-making
- OE1 – Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape and Seascape
- OE7 – Development affecting Heritage
- WC5 – Visitor Economy and Tourism Developments

6.0 THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 6.1 The Isles of Scilly is designated as a Conservation Area, reflecting its special architectural and historic interest. The designation recognises the distinctive character of the islands, derived from their historic settlement patterns, traditional built form, and sensitive landscape and coastal setting.
- 6.2 A defining characteristic of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area is the strong relationship between development and the natural environment. Buildings are often experienced within a landscape-led context, shaped by coastal topography, open views, and the presence of extensive greenery and maritime influences. The setting of buildings therefore forms an important part of the Conservation Area's overall significance.
- 6.3 The built character of the islands is generally formed by development of modest scale, with simple building forms and a consistent vernacular quality. Architectural interest is often expressed through proportion, restraint and detailing rather than elaborate ornamentation. Groups of buildings and their relationship to open spaces, gardens and coastal edges contribute to the overall townscape character.
- 6.4 Traditional materials and finishes play an important role in defining local distinctiveness. This typically includes painted or rendered walls, natural stone (including granite), slate roofs and

timber joinery. Fenestration is an important component of character, and the scale, proportion and detailing of windows and doors contribute to the appearance of buildings within the Conservation Area.

- 6.5 The Conservation Area designation does not prevent development or change. However, it requires that proposals are carefully designed so that they preserve, and where possible enhance, the character and appearance of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area, with particular attention to the use of appropriate materials, the treatment of elevations, and the maintenance of local distinctiveness.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The main material planning considerations to be considered as part of this assessment are as follows. Due to the private location of this proposal, there are no neighbour amenity issues.

- Principle of Development
- Character, Design and Heritage
- Neighbour Amenity
- Other Matters

Principle of Development

- 7.2 The proposal comprises the installation of bi-fold doors to an existing hotel building within the Karma St Martin's complex. The development is limited in scale and relates solely to alterations to the existing elevation through the installation of new doors within the stone clad building.
- 7.3 The site is an established hotel complex, and the proposal does not involve any change of use, additional units of accommodation, or expansion of the overall developed footprint. The use of the site therefore remains unchanged.
- 7.4 The principle of minor external alterations to an existing building within the established hotel complex is acceptable in land use terms, subject to consideration of design, heritage impacts (including the conservation area), and any other material planning considerations.

Character, Design and Heritage

- 7.5 As the site lies within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area the key consideration is whether the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, having regard to the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 7.6 The proposal is limited in extent and comprises the installation of bi-fold doors on the front elevation of the relevant building. No changes are proposed to the building's overall footprint, height, roof form or wider layout, and the works are confined to alterations to the existing fenestration.
- 7.7 The front elevation faces towards the landscaped garden area within the hotel grounds. As such, the proposed alteration would primarily be experienced within the context of the hotel site, and not from public viewpoints.
- 7.8 The principal heritage sensitivity relates to the design and detailing of the bi-fold doors, including their proportions, frame thickness, finish and overall appearance within the elevation. The proposed bi-fold doors will be brushed aluminium, and will be read as a simple, contemporary alteration within the existing elevation. Given the limited extent of the works and the absence of any change to the building's overall form, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area.
- 7.9 Given the modest nature of the works and the absence of any change to the building's overall form, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area and would not result in harm to heritage significance.

Other Matters

- 7.10 The proposal does not affect the existing access arrangements or parking provision within the hotel complex and would not result in any highways impacts.
- 7.11 The works are minor in nature and no other material planning considerations are raised by the development.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This application seeks planning permission for the installation of bi-fold doors to a small part of the Karma St Martin's hotel complex.
- 8.2 The site lies within the Isles of Scilly Conservation Area and the proposal has been assessed against the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as relevant national and local planning policy.
- 8.3 The proposed works are limited in scale and confined to alterations to the existing fenestration. No changes are proposed to the footprint, height or roof form of the building, and the development would not result in any harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 8.4 The proposal would also safeguard neighbouring amenity and would not give rise to any highways or access impacts.
- 8.5 For the reasons set out within this statement, the proposed development is considered acceptable, and planning permission should be granted.