

La Bellieuse House, Les Traudes, St. Martin, GY4 6RW
(Protected Building no. 1454, Property ref. J003120000)

Design Statement

1. **La Bellieuse** is a prominent building in the street of the same name leading eastwards past St Martin's Church, and is one of a series of historic properties within this part the St Martin's Conservation Area. Most of the adjacent buildings are in good condition, and have well documented historical records. La Bellieuse, by contrast, has suffered serious neglect for at least the last 40 years, and the history of the site is rather obscure. Until recent stabilisation works were undertaken, the building was overgrown with vegetation and the roof had partially collapsed allowing large amounts of water to enter and cause significant decay. This culminated in a major collapse of the roof structure just before permission was granted to commence stabilisation works.

2. **The exterior** of the building is a Protected Building, but this does not include the interior; in any case the interior and the roof have been lost following the major collapse. It was remarkable that the unusual large double-width gables did not collapse at the same time, and subsequently major structural stabilisation works have strengthened and conserved them so that they will be incorporated into the proposed development.

3. Whilst **elements of the building** are considered to be part of a C16th structure, it is not clear how much is in fact original. The front (North West) elevation has historic masonry which has more in common with that period than the C19th, but the building shown on the 1787 map is of a different shape and in a different location. The rest of the building is clearly the result of a major mid-C19th reconstruction, which shaped the dwelling in its current form. Notwithstanding the possible age of the front elevation, the windows throughout the building (with just two exceptions) are C19th, at varying stages of decay.

4. **The above factors** have all had an **important influence** on the proposals being submitted.

The front (NW) elevation forms a key element in the immediate street scene, and can also be viewed from St Martin's Churchyard. The intention is therefore to retain and enhance the appearance of the historic building from this side. Cleaning and repointing the granite with an appropriate lime mortar will have an immediate effect, and the windows are to be repaired and conserved, with minimal visual changes as detailed in the supporting documentation. The roofscape will be improved, in comparison with the rusting corrugated sheeting which was formerly prominent on this elevation. Unfortunately the great majority of black pantiles, which were on the lower section of roof, were lost in the roof collapse, but sufficient were salvaged to re-use on the smaller roof to the adjoining wing. The lower part of the main roof will be clad in textured re-claimed slates, the colour of which will echo the original pantiles, and the upper part of the roof, which is a shallow pitch, will be clad in lead-finished profiled cladding, although a slight modification in the geometry of the roof structure will mean that it is barely visible from street level. Part of the apex will incorporate a low-profile rooflight, which will allow natural light to permeate the central stairwell of what is a very deep floor plan for a domestic building. A traditional Guernsey cornice gutter

will complete the visual balance of the front elevation, and will replace the remains of a rotted timber gutter which collapsed with the roof.

5. **The wing** is to be repaired and retained largely as before, except with the addition of two traditional rooflights and a small window. The original pantiles were found to be coated in an asbestos material and had to be disposed of, but those salvaged from the main roof will be used in the re-roofing.

6. **The North East gable** elevation is largely hidden by the gable of the neighbouring farmhouse, which is only approx 600mm away. The exposed part of the gable will be repointed and retained.

7. **The rear (SE) elevation** was effectively completely rebuilt during the C19th alterations, and has a jumble of window and door openings which were adapted, blocked or altered to suit the raised external ground level, giving access to the internal ramp as referred to in the Statement of Significance. This arrangement causes difficulties to the internal planning, and creates significant damp issues due to the high water table on the site. Our proposals lower the floor level, and create an external terrace, which will incorporate land drainage to redirect groundwater away from the building. The window and door openings in the rear elevation will therefore be modified to facilitate this, and to reflect the new layout within the building. The treatment of the rear roof is similar to the front elevation.

8. **A new Garden Room extension** is planned on the site of the former (now ruined) vinehouse and this will link to the rear of the main house with a minimal glass structure. The Garden Room will facilitate enjoyment of the garden and create a space with a more contemporary feel, yet incorporating masonry and a timber fireplace lintel that has been salvaged from the ruins on site. The glass link creates a visual separation from the main house, and the angled plan prevents the extension dominating the original dwelling.

9. **The exterior walls and gateways** will be repaired and retained, and salvaged setts and limestone pavements from the site will be used for hard surfaces. The vehicular gateway from the street will be widened on the east side by approx 250mm, on the advice of the Fire Officer, to allow access by Fire Appliances.

10. Policy GP9: Sustainable Development

All buildings of La Bellieuse House apart from the existing walls of the ex-greenhouse, are to remain and are to be incorporated into the development, which serves to minimise waste and energy consumption, as well as efficient sourcing of materials. The stone from the ex-greenhouse walls will be set aside and reused to construct the walls of the proposed Garden Room extension and in the landscaping. The embodied energy of these existing historic buildings is very low, and given the nature of refurbishments of this type which require a careful, sensitive approach, much of the work will be done by hand using natural materials which have undergone minimal processing/manufacture, thereby retaining the low embodied energy of the building. The energy demand to reuse and upgrade an existing building of this type is far lower than would be if the building were to be demolished and reconstructed using modern and efficient construction techniques. A development such as

this has a lower impact than others of a similar scale where demolition and reconstruction would be the alternative option to retaining and upgrading the existing fabric.

The existing buildings are solid-wall constructions with timber single-glazed windows and external doors. The existing timber floor and roof structures were unsalvageable in their current form however a number of significant timber beams, other structural members and decorative joinery have been salvaged and will be reused in the development. Given that the external walls of La Bellieuse House are listed, upgrading of their thermal performance will be partly restricted by the priority to retain the historic elements and features, however it is intended to use a breathable insulating lime plaster to make some improvement and the new ground floors and roofs will be highly insulated in order to offset this and to bring the building up to an appropriate modern standard. The existing windows are to be retained and refurbished where of significant historic value, and it is proposed that where the windows are beyond repair and where openings are being altered, these are replaced with replicas to match the style of the existing but incorporating high performance slimline double glazing.

The space heating will be provided by electric underfloor heating supplemented by electric panel heaters where necessary, and hot water will be provided by electric hot water cylinders. The high levels of insulation in the floors, walls and roofs will minimise the load requirements for central heating, and all lighting will be low energy LED fittings.

The main house of La Bellieuse sits at the north-west end of the site, and the land naturally falls from south-east to north-west across the site. The ground level immediately south-east of the building is approximately 1m above the existing finished floor level. Although there is evidence of some drainage and a surface gully collecting and directing some of the surface water run-off into the watercourse north-west of the site via road drainage, the building is currently at moderate risk of flooding. It is intended therefore to lower the ground levels around the building so that they are no higher than the internal finished floor level, and to incorporate a series of land drains both around and under the building to collect and discharge surface water into the nearby watercourse.

Waste management

As mentioned above, existing structures are to be repaired and retained where possible so as to reduce waste through demolition. There are however, significant areas of decayed timber and irreparable plaster throughout the building and therefore these will need to be removed from the site and taken to the local recycling facility for processing. All floor finishes, fabrics etc. which remain in the building are beyond repair or reuse and will also be taken to the local recycling facility where possible. Broken bricks, blocks and concrete cannot be reused and will be either crushed on site and used as hardcore (to the approval of the project Engineer and Building Control) for the development, or removed from site and taken to the local recycling facility to be crushed and used as hardcore elsewhere.

All building materials which need to be removed but can be reused on the development such as slate, pantiles, bricks and granite, will be carefully removed, stored on site (the size of the site will allow for this, avoiding unnecessary transportation) and carefully reinstated/reused as required.