

Design review helped a controversial scheme win consent. The famous Burgh Island Hotel sought a new, free-standing suite on a rocky headland that was on Heritage Coast and affecting an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Council officers recommended refusal but in the end permission was granted. An outstanding piece of architecture can now go ahead.

'We obtained full planning consent for the Pool House. But it was a close run thing. What made the difference was the Review Panel and their belief that this could be a world class building.'

Anthony Orchard - CLIENT



Panel members on site (in stormy weather)

'SWDRP was a great supporter of our project. They offered excellent advice on how to develop the design within the context of the AONB policies, and through detailed insight of our scheme, were unquestionably useful in supporting the design quality of the proposal.'

*Lukas Barry - ASSOCIATE
CARMODY GROARKE ARCHITECTS*

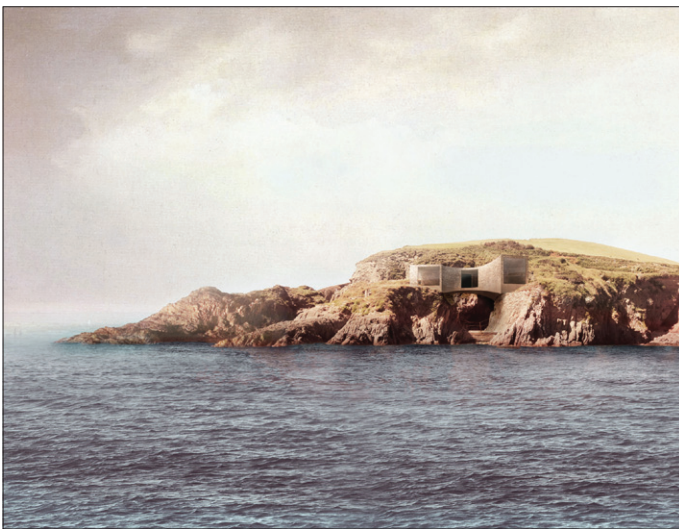
The Site and Outline Design - The site is a headland on the south east corner of Burgh Island 50m to the east of the Burgh Island Hotel, a listed building celebrated for its landmark position and Agatha Christie associations. The site is visible from the broad sands that emerge at low tide between the tidal island and mainland Devon and from the mainland coast including from Bigbury-on-Sea. The proposal was for a single-storey hotel suite - a building resting on the rocks in the form of an inhabited bridge.

The Review Process - The client and his design team soon encountered opposition because of the impact on the important coastal landscape. They doubted they could achieve planning permission without expert support and therefore asked the South West Design Review Panel - that they considered to be highly respected and objective - to review the scheme and the grounds for objection. The review by a multi-disciplinary panel of four was preceded by a site visit. The Local Authority took part.

The controversy - The South Devon AONB Unit raised a strong objection, saying the proposal: *'jars badly, particularly when read in conjunction with the hotel and other current buildings, adding a contrived structure perched on top of actively weathering rock structures in a manner that does not respect the listed hotel building nor the island's landscape and seascape character.'*

Officers from South Hams District Council then recommended the application be refused: *'Whilst a finely balanced judgment, it is considered that the adverse impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the AONB and Heritage Coast weighs greater than the potential to achieve innovative, outstanding architecture that would also benefit the economy and help to secure the future of an iconic listed building.'*

The elected members of the Development Management Committee, however, overturned the recommendation - by four votes to three (with three abstentions). The written guidance from the design review was reported to them. Full permission was granted (with a number of conditions, all of which the applicants accepted).



The Panel's views - The Panel agreed with the AONB Unit about the island's contribution to the setting of the AONB. They agreed that the impact was appreciable but then concluded that *'from none of the viewpoints did we find the impact caused serious harm'*. The Panel added that the site was not in its natural state but within the hotel grounds and above an inlet modified to form a swimming pool; also that this part of the island had a number of buildings already. They saw the proposal as *'for a semi-man-made site on the edge of a hamlet around a dominant building'* not *'a virgin site away from settlement.'*

The Panel praised the scheme as conceived and designed not merely to be inconspicuous but to be kin with its setting, a beautiful sculptural extension to the cliffs. *'The building will make a positive contribution to the natural setting.'* They believed the scheme had the potential to bring the highest quality architecture - an iconic building to raise standards of architecture and sensitivity to the landscape.

The Panel set out some reservations intended to ensure that the scheme adhered to the high quality claimed in every respect from design through to construction. They applauded the exemplary process with a competition, recognised the careful and wide-ranging work and consultation behind the application, and expressed confidence in the client and design team being able and willing to realise a scheme executed with the highest standards of detailing. The Panel looked forward to an exciting piece of architecture for Devon and the South West likely to be celebrated nationally and internationally.

'We knew that this sensitive location was a challenge to us as designers and to the custodians of the coastal landscape. But objectors to the development in principle were outweighed in the end by supporters, especially the Panel, who saw a commendable design synthesis of architecture and context, actually contributing to its island setting.'

*Mike Westley - DIRECTOR - WESTLEY DESIGN LTD
PROJECT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS*

CLIENT: Anthony Orchard
(Proprietor, Burgh Island Hotel)

DESIGN TEAM: Carmody Groarke Architects
and Westley Design

PLANNING
AUTHORITY: South Hams District Council

LOCATION: Burgh Island Hotel, Burgh Island,
Bigbury-on-Sea, Devon

NO OF UNITS: One standalone hotel suite

PLANNING
APPLICATION: 2879/16/FUL
Approved 15th March 2017