

Design and Access Statement



Extension and Alterations

Sidmouth Lifeboat Station, East Devon

P3: Submitted to Planning

Revisions

| Rev | Date | Comments | Checked |
|-----|------------|-------------------------|---------|
| P1 | 28 03 2024 | First issue for comment | DT |
| P2 | 08 04 2024 | Draft issue for comment | DT |
| P3 | 15 04 2024 | Submitted to Planning | DT |

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Introduction and Executive Summary

Sidmouth Lifeboat is a self-funded independent lifeboat charity that provides a 24/7 lifesaving search and rescue service across approximately 150 square miles of sea between Axmouth and Budleigh Salterton.

The team comprises 57 volunteers and one part-time employee, including 31 in the operational team, 22 in support roles, seven trustees and eight seasonal (paid) lifeguards.

The station is situated at the easternmost end of Sidmouth seafront, north of The Esplanade. Sidmouth Lifeboat operates two lifeboats;

- the Arctic 24 “Peter & Barbara Truesdale”
- the Sea Rider “Speedy Sid”.

Alongside these lifeboats are the necessary support vehicles/ apparatus such as the Arctic Tractor “Mary”, the Winch Tractor and manual turntable.

The current boathouse is cramped and better storage space is required. It is not currently possible to house the Sea Rider lifeboat within the lifeboat station – instead it is stored in an external remote garage accessed through Ham East car park - this is far from ideal. For further detail please see the Client Brief below.

This proposal is a two-storey extension to the east (extension footprint approximately 59sqm). This would enable all lifesaving assets (both lifeboats and both tractors) to be suitably housed under one roof. It is considered that this will help reduce existing launch and recovery times. It typically takes a minimum of ten minutes to launch (three people are required to move Sea Rider to the seafront).

As part of the works, it is proposed to refurbish and reconfigure existing internal spaces to improve circulation (particularly during a “shout”) and provide better quality spaces in general for the crew and support staff for many years to come.

Client Brief

Studio Four were appointed by Sidmouth Lifeboat to carry out feasibility studies and ultimately submit a planning application for an extension, internal reconfiguration, and external redecoration to the existing lifeboat station for reasons detailed in this report.

Key areas to be reviewed/ improved were:

- relocating the Sea Rider lifeboat into the main building to ensure all assets are under one roof for a swifter launch
- allowing garage to be released back to The Hub
- improved kit storage/ changing areas
- improved circulation
- improved crew / training / operational areas
- review souvenir shop and Public facing elements
- provide garage for The Watersports Hub
- thermal / sustainable / comfort improvements.

The site

Location

Sidmouth lifeboat station is located on Sidmouth sea front, at the eastern end of the Esplanade, close to where the River Sid meets the sea.



Figure 1. **Sidmouth Lifeboat.** Credit: Google Maps



Figure 2. **Location Plan** Credit: Studio Four Architects

York Street provides a divide in architectural styles; the buildings to the west reflect an ornamental regency style, whereas the buildings to the east identify with the maritime history of the site.

Sidmouth Lifeboat sits next to the Watersports Hub, with access into the Boat Yard between. The former Drill Hall and Public WCs are east of the Hub. Although not Listed, the Drill Hall is considered important to the heritage of Sidmouth. Redevelopment of The Drill Hall into a Rockfish restaurant has been submitted for planning by others and is currently an active application (19/1775/FUL), which is thought will help rejuvenate the local area.

History of Sidmouth Lifeboat

The original lifeboat station in Sidmouth was run by the RNLI. It was based opposite the current site on the corner of The Esplanade and York Street (Trinity Court) from 1869 until 1912, when the service was disbanded. The service was set up again in the 1960s in the current location, no longer as part of the RNLI, and in 1982 Sidmouth Inshore Rescue Service became a declared an independent rescue facility with the Coastguard and made available for call-outs 24/7.

Figure 3. **Sidmouth Lifeboat, first layout, 1960s.** Credit: Sidmouth Lifeboat

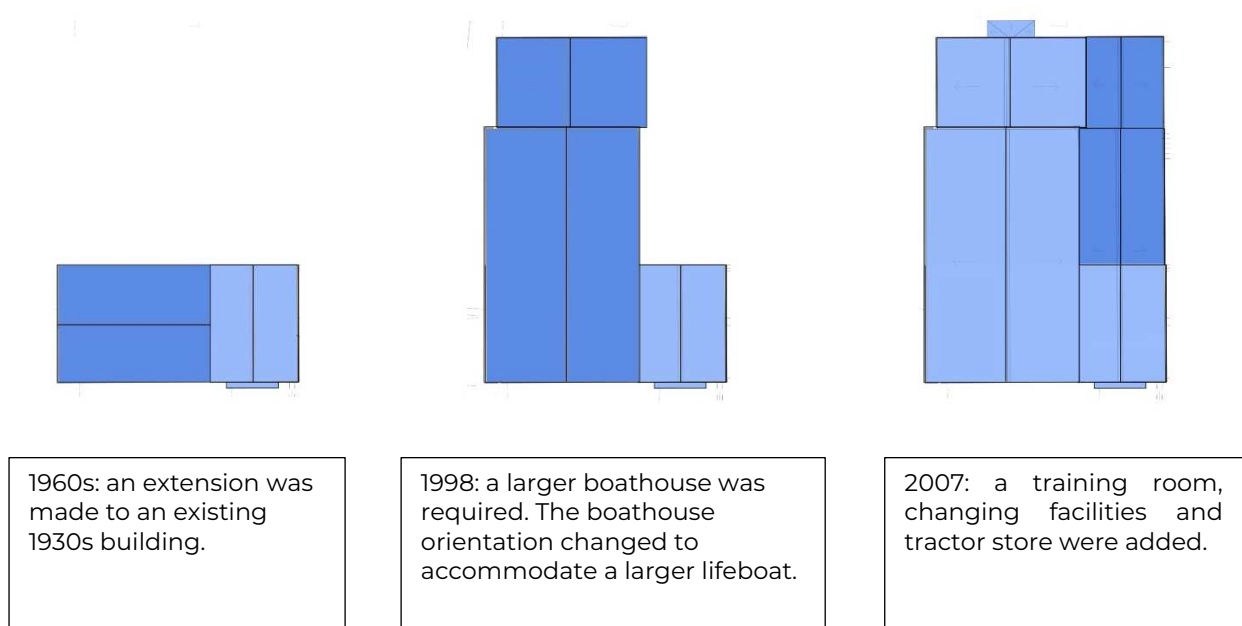


The 1960s lifeboat station was created through the significant extension of an existing 1930s building on The Esplanade. The boathouse was perpendicular to the original building.

See also figure 4.

The building form has evolved over the years and grown to suit the advances in lifesaving vehicles / kit / numbers of volunteer crew.

Figure 4. **Sidmouth Lifeboat, evolution of existing building.** Dark blue = extension.



Sidmouth Lifeboat today

The current lifeboat station is a two-storey building that contains the following spaces;

Ground floor

- Arctic lifeboat boathouse, including a small area used as a souvenir outlet and public viewing space during opening hours
- Crew changing area
- Showers
- WC
- Kitchen area that is also a store room
- First floor
- Crew training / Operations (Ops) area.



Figure 5. **Sidmouth lifeboat station 2007 – present.** Credit: Studio Four

The spaces are all generally cramped and there is a shortage of storage. The crew changing room is particularly inadequate - kit is hung and stored on rails and there is not enough rail length available for all the kit. As a result, each drysuit is squashed onto the rail. When kit is wet, drying becomes difficult as air cannot circulate, which in turn impacts the longevity of the kit.

At first floor the crew room is combined with the ops area. It is a long, thin space, not ideal for crew operational training/ gatherings. The low roof level reduces useable space further still.

The building construction does not meet modern standards. All spaces are extremely cold in the winter, which is not ideal for the crew, especially when returning from the sea and need to change and warm up. In addition, when staff/ volunteers need to work at the operational area in the crew room, this is also cold and local, inefficient electric heaters have to be turned on. A more energy efficient solution is required.

Existing floorplans

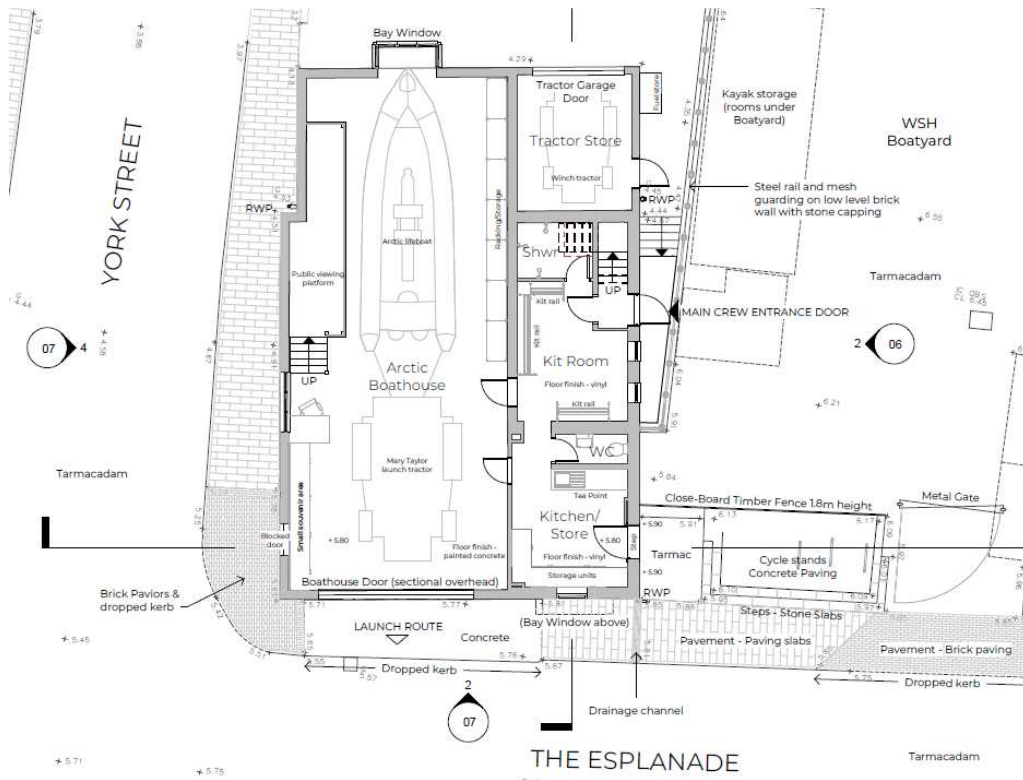


Figure 6. **Existing ground floor plan** by Studio Four Architects

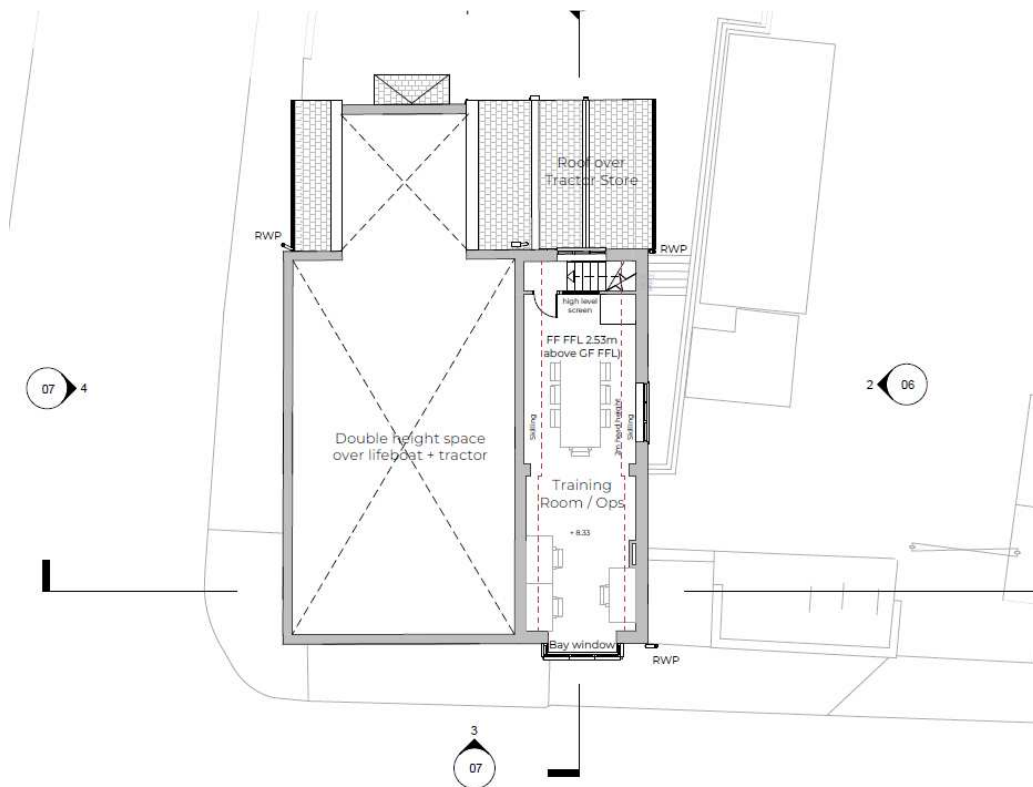


Figure 7. **Existing ground floor plan** by Studio Four Architects

Existing launch and recovery method

The main station boathall houses the Arctic 24 “Peter & Barbara Truesdale” lifeboat and tractor with a second (winch) tractor located in a garage on the north of the building.

Currently the smaller Sea Rider “Speedy Sid” lifeboat is stored in a cramped, uninsulated garage space accessed through Ham East Car Park, separate from the station and not visible to the public. Operationally this is far from ideal as it slows down launch times; the crew have to manually manoeuvre the lifeboat across the car park and push it up a short steep section of York Street before they reach the sea front. This is particularly difficult in the cold winter months and busy in the summer months.

The Arctic lifeboat is launched / recovered on the beach, further west along The Esplanade. The Sea Rider is launched down the ramps directly in front of the station and occasionally recovered to the east.



Figure 8. **Sidmouth Lifeboat from York St.** Credit: Studio Four Architects

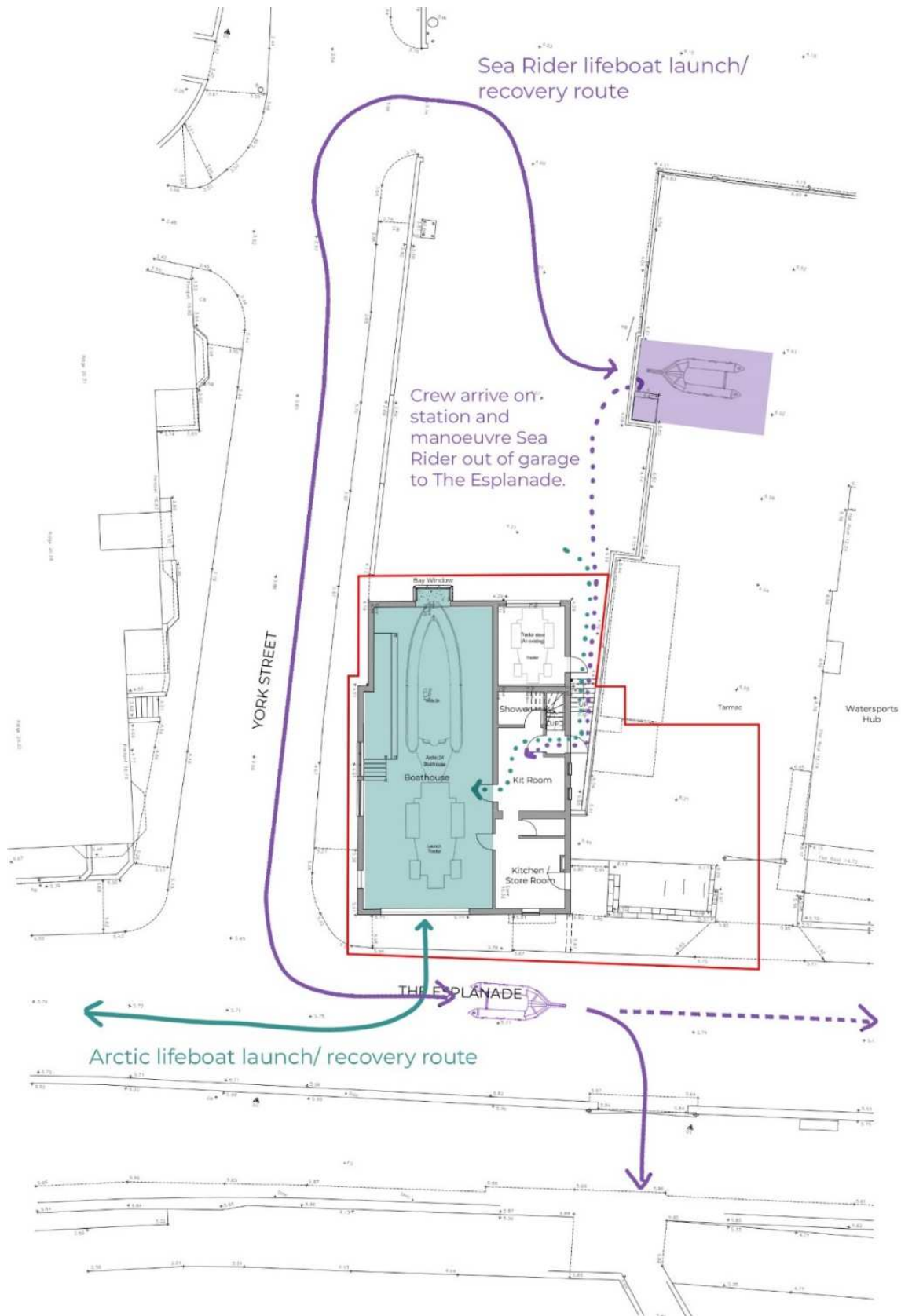


Figure 9. Existing launch/ recovery routes by Studio Four Architects

Building aesthetic

As shown in figure 4, the building is an evolution of previous reconfigurations. It has maintained its character throughout the years, even with fairly major interventions/ extensions. Notable features include the bay window along The Esplanade elevation (which was part of the building before it became a lifeboat station) and also the gable roof form.

The external wall finish is a beige render with a continuous royal blue painted plinth around the perimeter. The station has a mix of original painted timber and more recent UPVC windows. The roof is slate tile.

The existing building is generally in need of redecoration internally and externally. Where fixings/ fittings have been used that are not suitable for the challenging saline marine environment, rust staining has marked the render giving an unsightly appearance.

Opportunities, constraints and Planning consultation process

Flood Risk

Sidmouth Lifeboat appointed Ramboll to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to understand the effect the proposal will on the site and its context. Please see the full report under Appendix D.

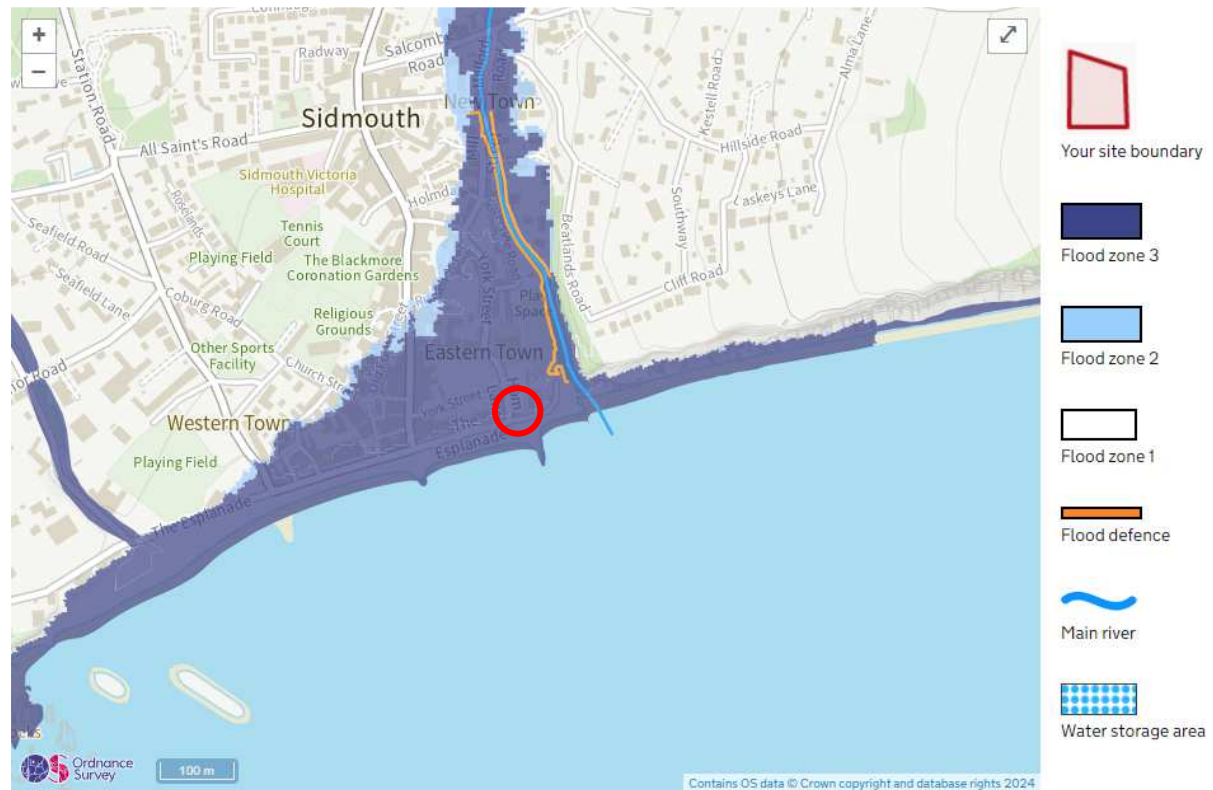


Figure 10. gov.uk **Flood Map** showing the site is within Flood Zone 3 (site marked with red circle)

In summary, the FRA concluded (quoted from document):

- The site is within Flood Zone 3
- development is appropriate as lifeboat stations are classified as 'water compatible'. The guidance states that water compatible developments are appropriate in all Flood Zones and are not subject to the Exception Test
- The site is not within an area assessed to be at risk from fluvial flooding and flood risk on the site relates to wave overtopping. The site would only be affected by flooding were storm conditions to coincide with a high tide, such that wave overtopping of defences could occur. The potential for shallow flooding could be managed through:
 - the use of flood resilient building methods
 - by ensuring drains to the south of the Site and the beachfront remain clear
 - by Site personnel signing up for flood warning alerts

The following mitigation measures could be considered at the site to ensure that assets are not damaged by flooding:

- Building materials at ground level (to an indicative height of 600 mm) should be flood resilient such that were they to come in to contact with water permanent

damage would not occur. Typically, the use of concrete flooring and sealed block walls would provide suitable protection.

- Electrical fittings and fixtures should be set above 600 mm from ground level. If service entry points to the building are at ground level electrical fittings should be water resistant.
- Non-return valves could be fitted to foul drains leading from the Site to prevent backflow of sewage.
- It should be ensured that outfalls from the frontage of the lifeboat station to the beachfront are cleared and maintained, such that drainage of water from The Esplanade would not be impeded.

The site is set in a location served by existing surface water drains, with runoff draining either via a gully at the south extent of the site on the Esplanade to outfalls from the seawall to the beachfront, or from surface water drains to the north to the sewer network, ultimately discharging via a pumping station adjacent to the Sid to the northeast of the site.

The site is entirely impervious hard surfacing. The proposed development would continue to be served by the existing drainage network and would result in no change to surface water runoff rates in the area.

The site would not lead to an alteration in runoff rates, and as such would not lead to any potential increase in flood risk in areas outside of the site boundary, no further surface water management measures are required for the site.

Heritage

Sidmouth lifeboat station is within Sidmouth Conservation Area. The building is not Listed, nor is it a building of historical significance or architectural importance.

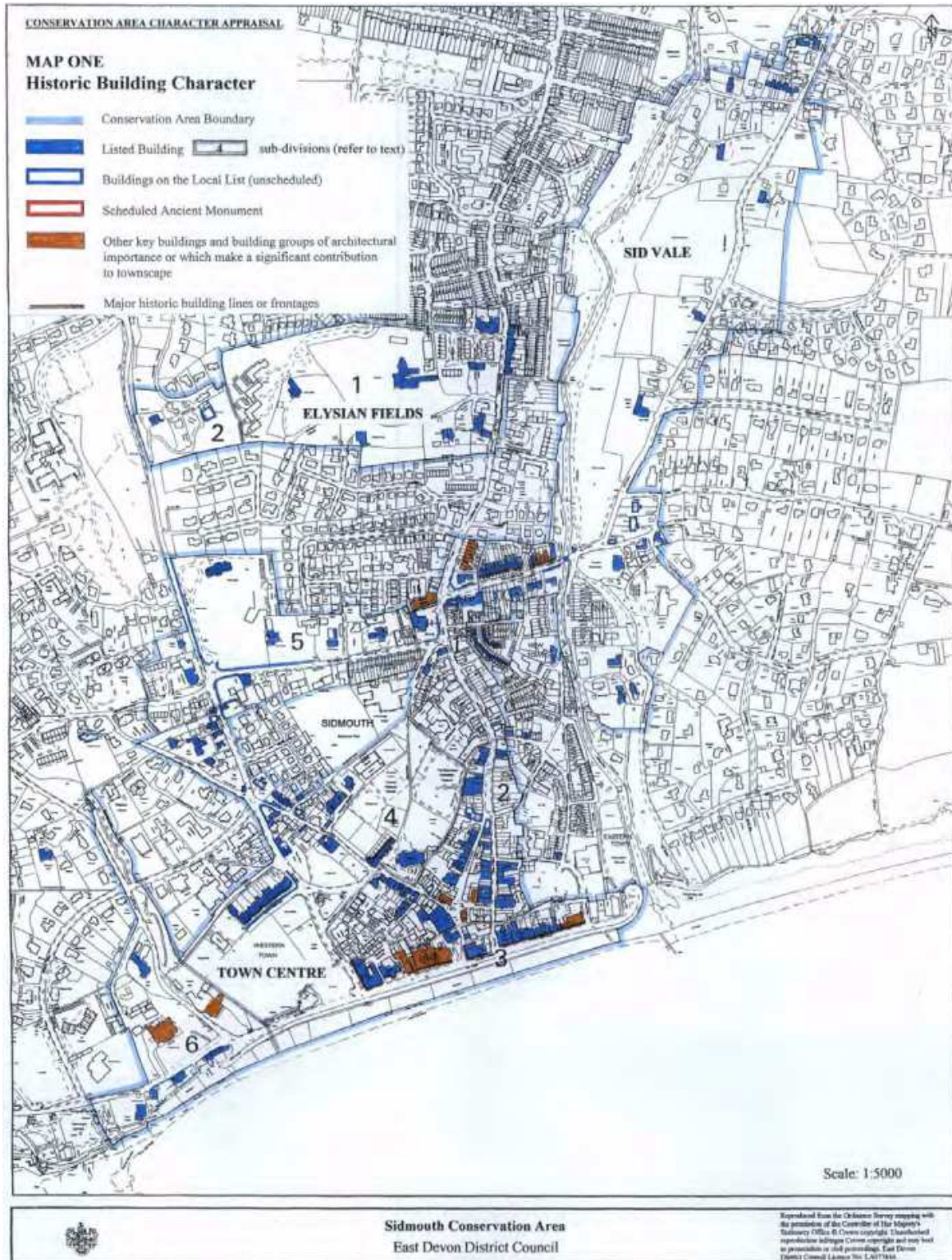


Figure 11. **Sidmouth Conservation Area boundary.** Source: East Devon District Council

Trinity Court, an apartment building on The Esplanade, is considered a key building of architectural importance which makes a significant contribution to the townscape. It is located approximately 12m to the west of the proposed site and is separated and not Listed. The parade of buildings to the west of Trinity Court are Listed. These are located approximately 45m from the proposed site.

The view along York Terrace, looking easterly along the seafront is identified as a key public viewpoint in both the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan and the Sidmouth Conservation Area Appraisal.



Figure 12. **Sidmouth protected view 3.** Source: East Devon District Council

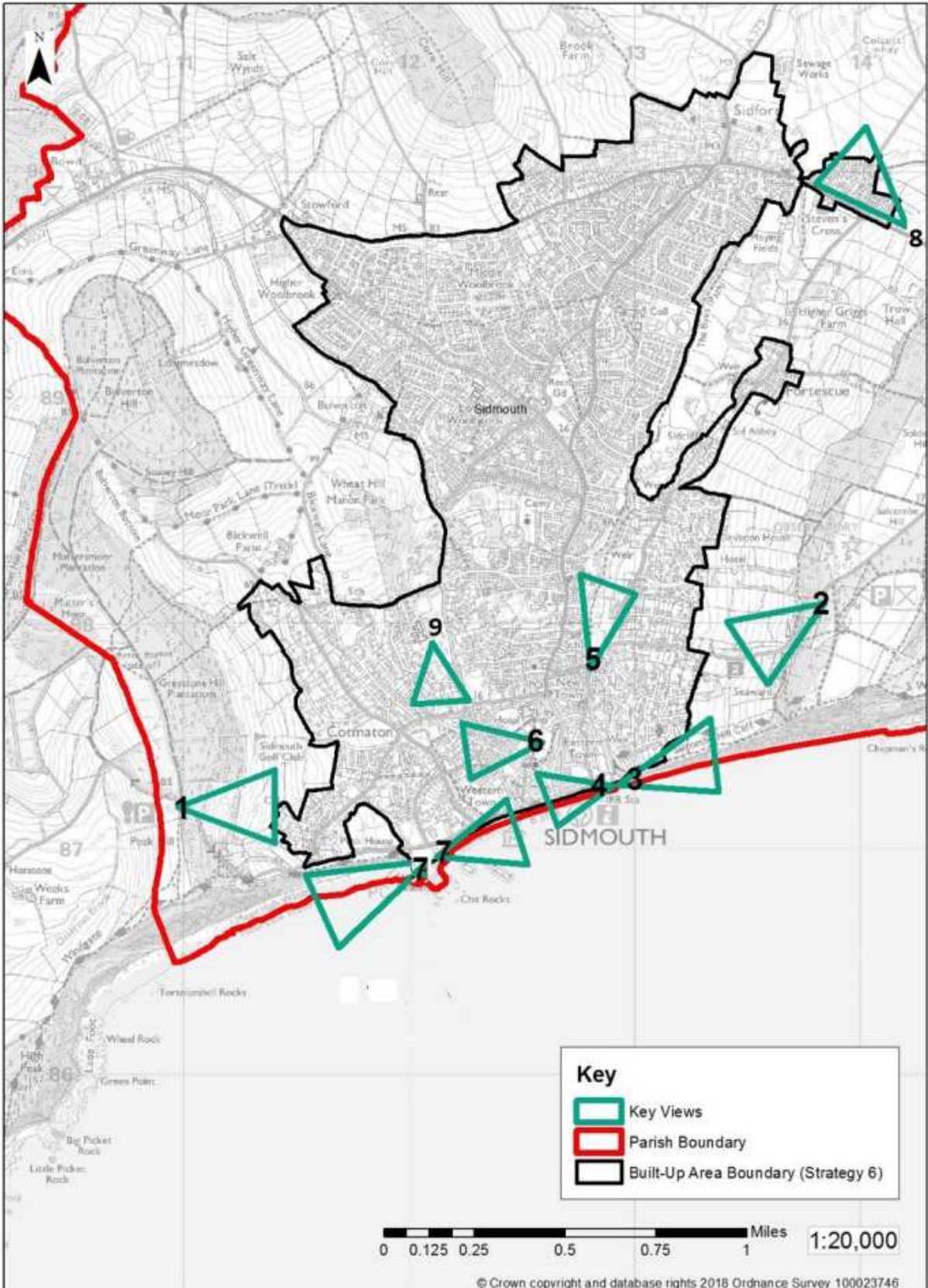


Figure 13. Sidmouth protected views map. Source: East Devon District Council

Ecology

Biodiversity and geological conservation

The site is not (nor near) a designated site, important habitat nor contains other biodiversity features.

There are no features of geological conservation importance in or near the site.

It is not located within or adjacent to any significant land or marine designations which the proposed works might negatively impact. The closest designated sites are Sidmouth to West Bay SAC and Sidmouth to Beer Coast SSSI which are both 100m to the east of the structure surveyed.

A **Preliminary Roost & Nest Survey** of the existing building and local site was undertaken on 23rd February 2024 by Ecological Surveys Ltd. Please see Appendix E for the full report. In summary, the key information is as follows (quoted from document);

- The survey confirmed that the existing block-built structure does not offer suitable habitat for hibernating roosting bats or bats roosting during the active season and therefore, no further action is required with respect to bat roosts.
- mitigation for bats, apart from the application of a Lighting Strategy to protect onsite commuting/foraging habitat, is therefore not a requirement, neither are additional bat surveys.
- Active or inactive bird nests were not recorded as present. Therefore, no loss to nesting features are expected under this development.
- Development at this site, at this present time, are not considered likely to cause disturbance, harm or death to either protected species: bats or birds.
- Enhancement of the site post development is required. The habitat value has been taken into account when making enhancement recommendations. It is considered that enhancement for birds will be of value owing to the habitat onsite/ offsite offering biodiversity value for this species.
- Providing Enhancement recommendations are agreed and enacted, there would appear to be no ecological reasons why this proposal should not go ahead.

Ecological Surveys confirmed verbally that the provision of a surface mounted bird box, with a 28mm diameter hole, would be suitable for blue tits and grey tits but exclude house sparrows (intended). This has been recommended as the built-in masonry bird boxes are not suitable for the cladding on the proposed elevations. The bird box will be installed at high level on the north elevation wall, just beneath the gable ridge.

As no evidence of potential bat roosts have been found in the immediate area of the proposal, a Phase 2 ecology survey is not required.

Trees and hedges

There are no trees nor hedges within the proposed site or land adjacent to the proposed development that could influence the development.

Pre-application consultation

A pre-application was submitted to the local planning authority regarding an outline proposal for the extension (see Appendix C – Pre-application response). The architectural information submitted included sketch floorplans and a 3D view of the proposal in its street scene. Advice was favourable and considered acceptable in principle.

In summary, advice given in the response was as follows (quoted from email response):

- Development will be permitted subject to there being no adverse impacts on any heritage interests and nearby residents, the proposals are sensitive in scale and that the site is accessible.
- Development should reflect the river estuary ambience and the maritime heritage of the site.
- The proposal to extend the lifeboat station therefore would be deemed to be acceptable in principle given that the facilities are designed to improve the existing service to the local community and visitors to Sidmouth, will provide an enhanced visitor attraction and is in keeping with the maritime heritage of the east end of Sidmouth seafront.
- It would be advantageous from the perspective of visitors to the seafront if the garage door to the Sea Rider could be partially glazed to allow glimpses into the boat even when the doors are closed.
- Any detailed proposals will need to have consideration to both the aesthetics and the longevity of the proposed materials and detailing given the very exposed nature of the site.
- Proposals will have to be mindful of the need to preserve the setting of the distinctive regency architecture, particularly with the key public viewpoint along York Terrace looking east along the seafront. A lower ridge on the extension is favoured to help this.



Figure 14. **Preliminary sketch proposal** submitted for pre-app by Studio Four Architects.

Design proposals

Overview

The proposed scheme seeks to extend the existing lifeboat station to house all lifesaving assets under one roof. The Sea Rider will no longer be separate, it will have its own boathouse / garage with direct access out onto the Esplanade for launch and recovery. Internally it will be accessed from the crew changing room, this will improve operation by reducing launch time and reduce manual handling risk. The proposal reconfigures the internal spaces to improve the flow of people, which can be hectic in a high pressure situation. The scheme provides Sidmouth Lifeboat with additional training, storage, work and meeting space. Thermal comfort is improved considerably and running and maintenance costs reduced through sustainable interventions including improved insulation and mechanical systems.



Figure 15. **Proposed 3D view of development** by Studio Four Architects

The proposal seeks to be another evolution of the existing building, respecting and preserving its character, and further enhancing its maritime features. The scale, massing, density, height, fenestration and materials are considered to relate well to the context in line with the East Devon District Council – East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031. The bay window is preserved; its windows and cladding replaced to be in keeping with the extension.

The Sidmouth Lifeboat building links the maritime area of the frontage to the rest of the seafront.

Extension at ground floor: new boathouses/ garages

The two storey extension measures approximately 7 metres wide and 7.5 metres deep. The extension footprint will cover an area of existing hard standing currently used as external boat yard/ open hardstanding. The proposed internal floor level will be continuous throughout the ground floor, as existing.

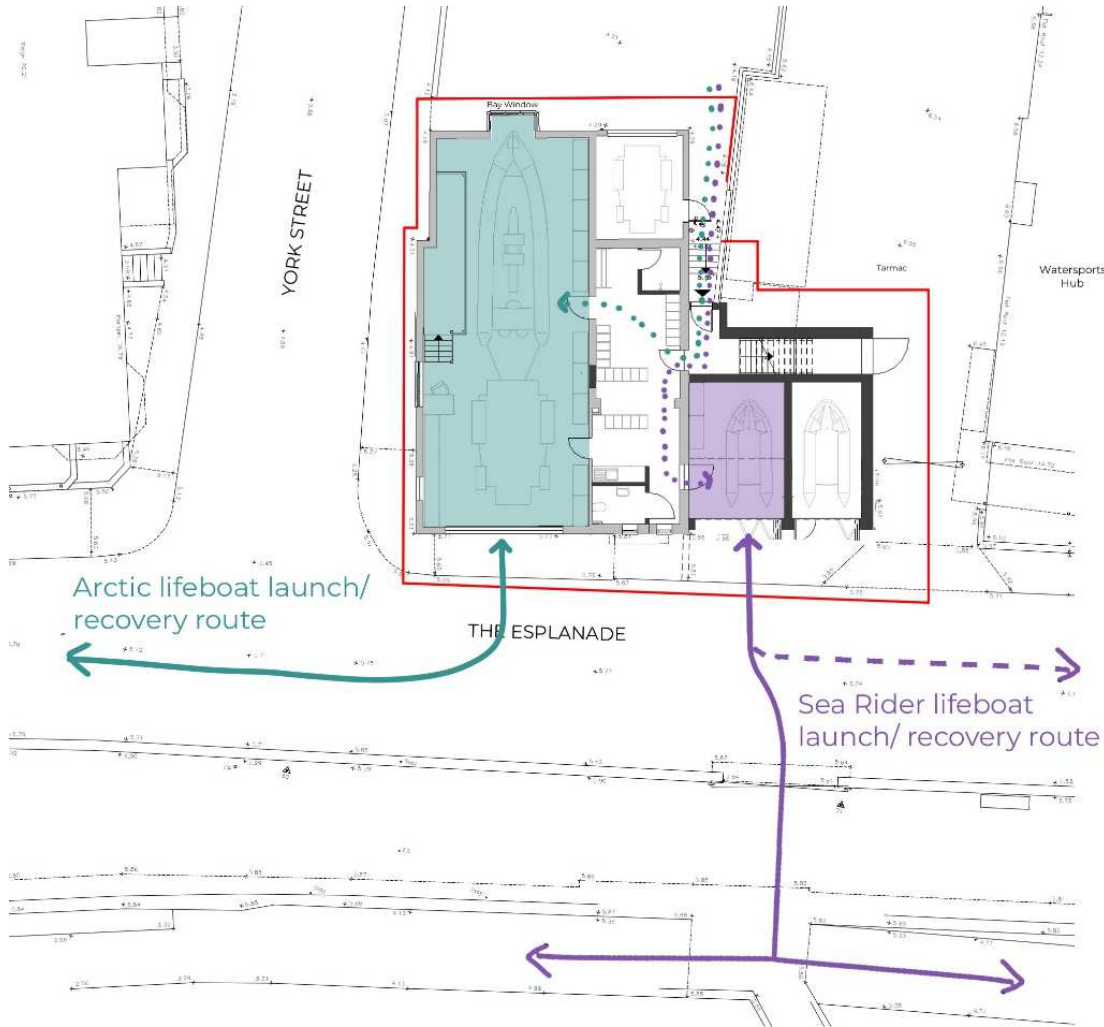


Figure 16. **Proposed launch/ recovery routes** by Studio Four Architects

The new location for the Sea Rider enables easier access, maintenance and general day-to-day convenience.

It allows a single crew member to open the door and begin preparing for launch to ensure readiness as soon the crew are assembled.

It also has the added benefit of Sea Rider being visible to the public / passers-by. Vision panels will be incorporated into the boathouse doors, as per the Pre-Application response, to allow glimpses into the boat when the doors are closed. However, a heavy privacy curtain will divide the space so that any casualties/ deceased can be assessed/ treated with respect.

Proposed floorplans

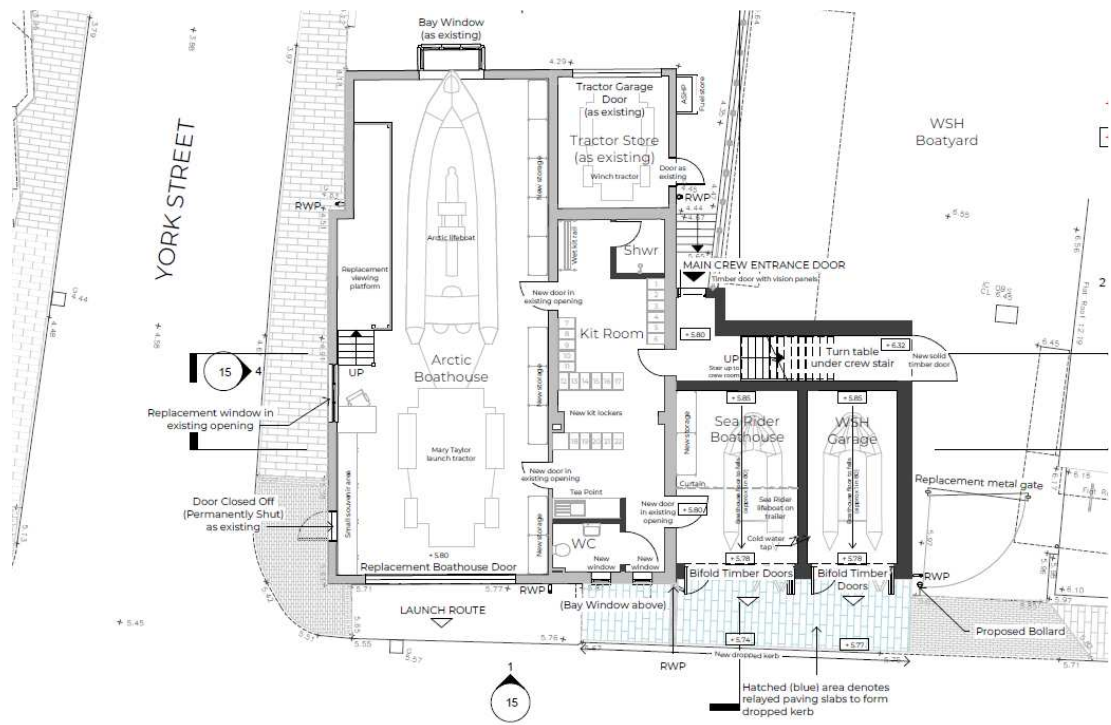


Figure 17. **Proposed ground floor plan** by Studio Four Architects

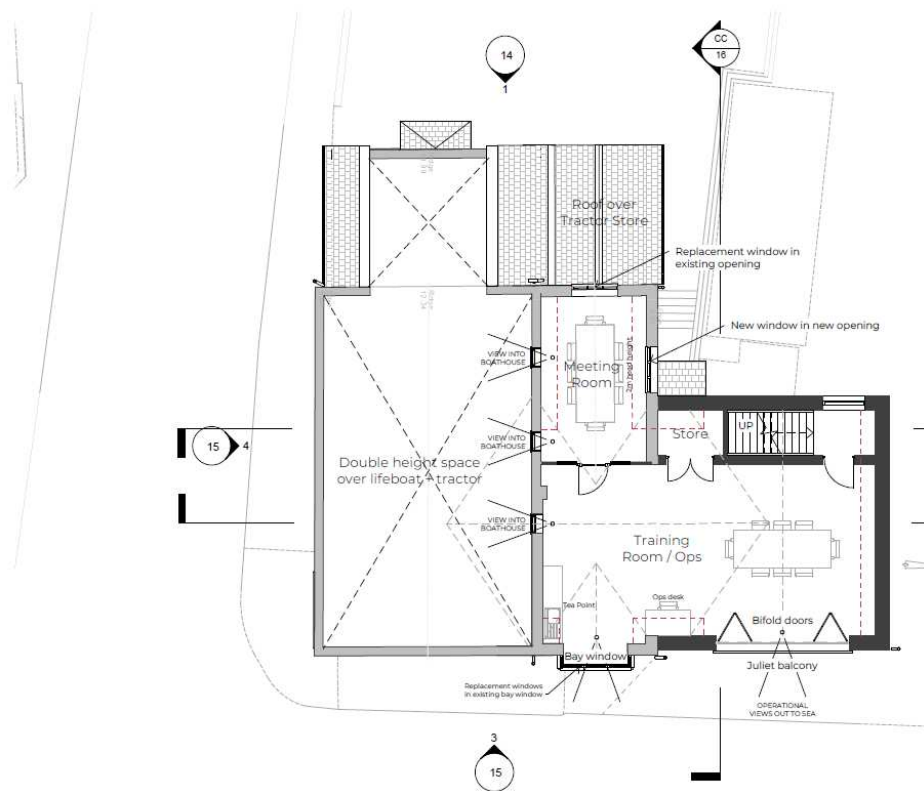


Figure 18. **Proposed ground floor plan** by Studio Four Architects



Figure 19. **Location of proposed extension.** Photo by Studio Four Architects

As part of the development, a garage for use by the Watersports Hub is provided to the east of the plan. The extension is partially on land owned by the Watersports Hub and provision for both the Sea Rider lifeboat and the very similar Hub boat will enable both organisations to function more efficiently. The new Hub garage will be accessed independently of the lifeboat station and have sub-metered services provision. As part of the arrangement the large external garage, accessed via Ham (east) car park, will be returned to Watersports Hub for their use.

Extension at first floor: new meeting room and improved training / ops area

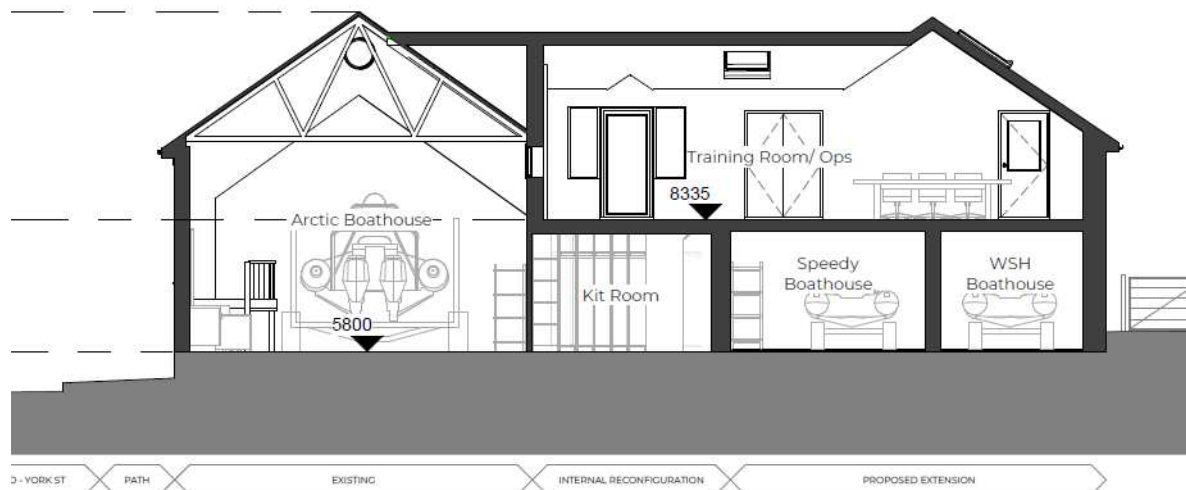


Figure 20. **Section through proposed extension.** Drawing by Studio Four Architects

The first floor will accommodate a larger crew room for training purposes and a much-needed separate private meeting room. The large gable window facing south will afford improved operational views over the launch / recovery route.

Due to the south-facing window, a solar study / thermal modelling exercise has been carried out by a Sustainability Specialist. The findings have influenced the design of the gable overhang above the glazing which is proposed to project out to be in line with the bay window. This reduces the level of solar gain, particularly in the summer, and reduces overheating risk.

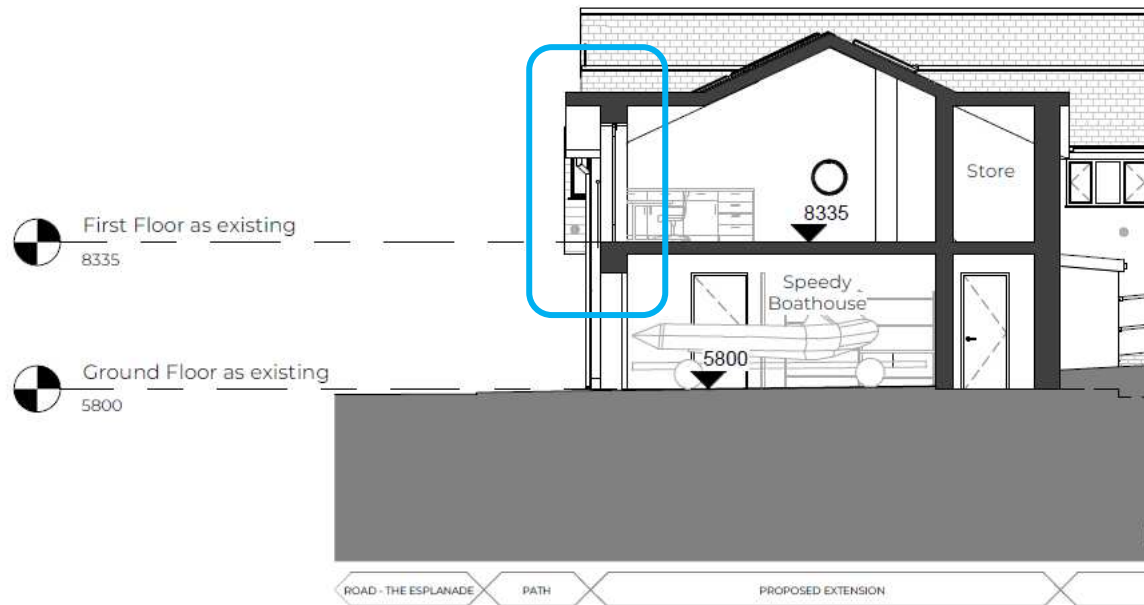


Figure 21. **Section through proposed extension showing gable overhang.**
Drawing by Studio Four Architects

A Juliet balcony and bi-fold doors are proposed to open up this space to the outside. The floor level will match the existing first floor. Openable rooflights will allow cross ventilation in the summer.

Setting/ context

The local street pattern is clearly defined as pitched roofs (a similar pitch) and clean geometric forms, see figure 22.

The proposed extension has been designed to fit within a 'gap' in the street scene, whilst maintaining access to the boathouse behind. The ridge line of the extension is slightly lower than the main boathouse ridge, making the new structure subservient to the existing main boathouse (as was suggested in the Pre-Application feedback). All high points of the surrounding roofs are notably taller to the east and significantly taller to the west.

In the contextual elevations below, the proposed indicates the possible Rockfish development currently in for planning (by others) so that it can be imagined as part of wider redevelopment of the street scene.



Figure 22. **Existing and proposed contextual elevation** by Studio Four Architects

As part of the joint arrangement with the Watersports Hub the proposal also includes rendering the ground floor level brickwork of the Watersports Hub building which is currently in a poor condition. This rendering of the Watersports Hub will follow the maritime vernacular of the extension to Sidmouth Lifeboat and provide a tidier aesthetic to the frontage of both buildings as well as the wider context.

Materials

The proposed materials have been selected as they will be long lasting in the marine environment. The palette is softer than existing, no longer primary blue, but maintaining the contrast between the walls and the plinth and fascias.

Walls:

- Existing: Beige coloured rendered finish with a painted royal blue plinth.
- Proposed:
 - Ground floor: Off-white painted render walls with painted blue plinth to match 'Ocean Blue' Cedral Click cladding boards.
 - First floor: Horizontal cladding in Cedral Click boards, 'Ocean Blue' colour.

Note: The existing building render will be painted to match the extension, as will the render to the ground floor brickwork of the Hub.

Roof:

- Existing: Slate tight tiles with Royal Blue timber fascias.
- Proposed: (extension roof): zinc standing seam, VM Zinc Quartz colour.

Note: Existing fascias and soffits to be replaced with Trespa self-finished board, colour to match 'Ocean Blue' Cedral Click cladding boards.

Windows:

- Existing: A combination of white painted timber frame and UPVC windows.
- Proposed: All new and replacement windows to be Accoya timber frame.

Note: Single window to the westerly elevation to be replaced with a timber window in the same style as the existing.

External doors – personnel:

- Existing: Timber panel doors, painted Royal Blue.
- Proposed: All new doors to be Accoya timber, with double glazed vision panels where required.

External doors – boathouse:

- Existing: Arctic boathouse door is sectional overhead, Royal Blue colour.
- Proposed:
 - Arctic boathouse door to be replaced with additional vision panels, colour to match as closely as possible to 'Ocean Blue' Cedral Click cladding boards.
 - New doors for Sea Rider and WSH boathouses to be Iroko timber bi-fold, stained in natural wood to match door and window frames.

Vehicle access and hard standing:

- Existing:
 - Outside Arctic boathouse: concrete slab and dropped kerb.
 - Outside proposed garage doors: paving slabs.
- Proposed:
 - Outside Arctic boathouse: as existing.
 - Outside proposed garage doors: existing paving slabs relayed to new dropped kerb.

Lighting:

- Existing: There are currently 2 large floodlights above the Arctic boathouse, and a third floodlight fixed to the southeastern corner of the station, facing easterly.

- Proposed: Replacement floodlights as per existing, and 2 smaller floodlights above Sea Rider and WSH boathouses, symmetrical about the gable window. Standard access/ emergency egress lighting will be installed adjacent to new personnel doors.

Other

Aerials:

The existing aerials will be split and repositioned around the proposed extension. Locations are as follows:

- VHF aerial – located on the southern elevation on the lower ridge of the crew room
- Weather station - located on the southern elevation on the larger new ridge of the crew room
- Pager Antenna – can be orientated in any direction and is therefore placed on the northern (rear) elevation on the extension.

Solar panels:

It is proposed to incorporate 6 solar panels on the south facing roof (25 degree pitch). Initial investigations show that 6 panels should provide around 2.5kWh which will provide 'free' electricity to the appliances/ monitoring equipment that are typically switched on the majority of the time, even if the building is not in use.

By placing the panels on this section of proposed roof only, it protects the key views from the Conservation Area of the town (notably the roof visible from the west).

Signage:

Signage will be replaced as per the existing, in existing locations.

Heating systems:

An Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) is proposed to provide heat to a new Under Floor Heating (UFH) system. The external unit will be mounted on the east facing wall of the existing building, accessible from ground level for maintenance. Refer to proposed east elevation.

Access:

- Staff/ volunteer access into the lifeboat station will be as per the existing arrangement; in through the main personnel door accessed from the car park.
- Vehicle parking situation to remain as existing.
- Cycle Parking will be relocated to the front of the Watersports Hub beneath the balcony. Number of cycle hoops to remain as existing.

Waste storage:

Waste storage to remain as existing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is hoped that the scheme will be favoured to be a positive addition to the local street scene, whilst providing the much needed space from which Sidmouth Lifeboat will operate from. Having the Sea Rider lifeboat within the main building will also reduce launch times and the associated difficulties.

The flood risk assessment concludes the site is not within an area assessed to be at risk from fluvial flooding and flood risk on the site relates to wave overtopping of defences.

The Preliminary Roost and Nest Assessment confirmed that the existing structure does not offer suitable habitat for hibernating roosting bats or bats roosting during the active season. In addition to this, active or inactive bird nests were not recorded during the survey therefore no loss to nesting features are expected under this development.

Enhancement of the site post development is however required. It is considered that enhancement for birds will be of value owing to the habitat onsite/ offsite offering biodiversity value for this species. The development therefore proposes the inclusion of bird boxes, installed at high level on the north elevation wall beneath the gable ridge.

Considerable attention has been given to the design, scale, and material selection of the proposal. The extension has been carefully scaled to provide adequate crew training space internally without exceeding the ridge height of the existing boathall. This ensures compliance with Policy 2 of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan, respecting protected views along The Esplanade.

The overall appearance has retained the gabled form of the existing and materials have been thoughtfully chosen to reflect the fishing and coastal heritage of the site, as well as to provide a low-maintenance solution to ensure the longevity of the proposed materials given the exposed maritime nature of the site. The design incorporates elements mirroring those of the original building, featuring render on the ground floor with a painted plinth, coloured horizontal cladding on the first floor, and a zinc standing seam roof.

Appendix A - Photos of existing building



Figure 23. **Sidmouth Lifeboat south elevation** – as existing



Figure 24. **Sidmouth Lifeboat north elevation** – as existing



Figure 25. **Boatyard** to the east of the station – as existing



Figure 26. **Crew Room** – as existing



Figure 27. **Arctic Boathall** – as existing

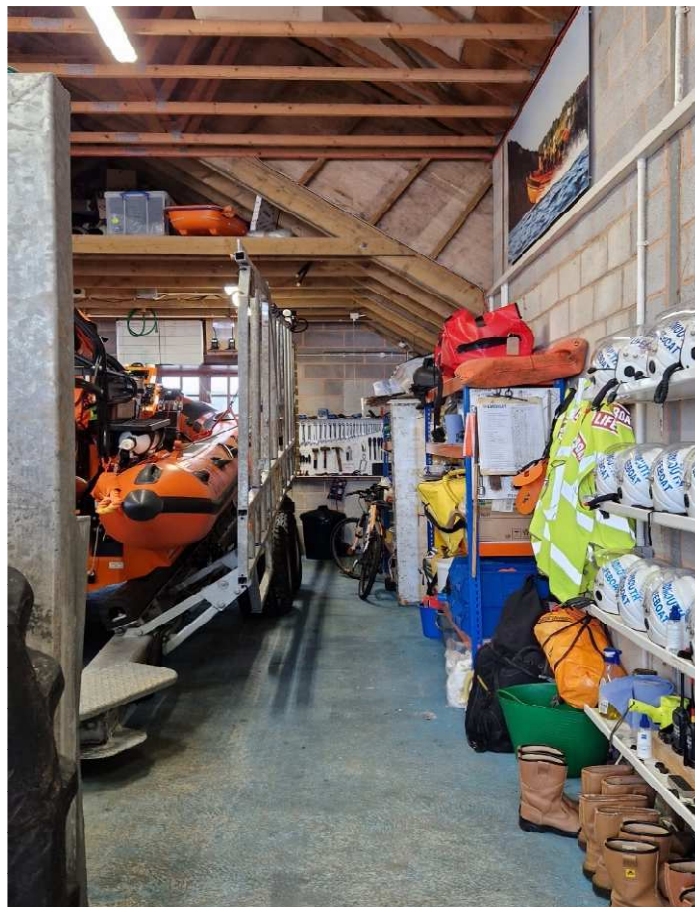


Figure 28. **Better storage required within Arctic Boathall** – as existing



Figure 29. **Small crew kit room** – as existing



Figure 30. **Sea Rider garage** – as existing

Appendix B – Planning drawings (attached separately).

Appendix C – Pre-Application response

From: Jill Himsworth <JHimsworth@eastdevon.gov.uk>

Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2023 1:26 PM

To: Danielle Tucker <D.Tucker@s4architects.co.uk>

Subject: 23/0114/PREAPP - Proposed extension and internal reconfiguration of Sidmouth lifeboat station

Dear Ms Tucker,

Pre-application enquiry: Proposed extension and internal reconfiguration of Sidmouth lifeboat station, The Esplanade, Sidmouth, EX10 8BE

I refer to the pre-application enquiry that you have submitted to East Devon District Council in relation to the above proposal. The prospective scheme would involve the erection of a two storey extension to the east of the current lifeboat station, to house the second smaller lifeboat which is currently stored away from the main building, and a new crew training room. Alongside this, the internal reconfiguration of the existing facilities would provide additional space for storage for crew kit, and improved changing spaces within the existing building.

Sidmouth Lifeboat is a self-funded independent lifeboat charity that provides a life saving search and rescue service between Axmouth and Budleigh Salterton. The original lifeboat station was based opposite the current site on the corner of The Esplanade and York Street between 1869 and 1912, when the service was disbanded. The service was set up again in the 1960s, and in 1998 a new lifeboat, the 'Sidmouth Herald' was purchased, which required a longer boathouse. The current lifeboat house was created through the significant extension of an existing 1930s building on The Esplanade in Sidmouth. The building was extended again in 2007, to the rear, to provide a training room, changing facilities and tractor store.

The Proposals

Sidmouth Lifeboat currently operate two boats, but the existing building only has space for one of these, the larger Artic 24 boat. The smaller second boat, the Sea Rider, is currently stored in a garage accessed through Ham East car park.

The proposals indicate a two storey extension to the existing lifeboat station to provide improved storage and better crew facilities, which would result in faster response times to call outs. The second lifeboat would be housed within the new extension, allowing the crew direct access to both lifeboats and allowing the Sea Rider immediate access to The Esplanade for launch.

The proposed extension measures approximately 7 metres wide and 7.5 metres deep, and will occupy an area of hardstanding currently used as external boat storage. The first floor will accommodate a new crew room for training purposes, with improved views over the launch area. The ground floor changing room will be able to extend into the current ground floor crew room, providing more storage for crew kit and less cramped circulation space. We understand that talks are underway with the water sports club, and it is envisaged that the current garage used to store the Sea Rider will be given

to the water sports club for their use by way of mitigation for the lost area of boatyard that will be required to construct the extension.

Analysis of the Proposal

The main issues for consideration are the principle of development, the visual impact and design of the extension, and the flood risk.

Principle of development

The building lies within the Sidmouth Built-up Area Boundary and within the Sidmouth Town Centre Conservation Area. Local Plan Policy RC6 is relevant in terms of extensions to existing facilities to serve the local community, which will be permitted on sites within the Built-up Area Boundary provided they are compatible with the character of the site and its surroundings, are well related to the built form of the settlement, the site is accessible, and the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents. The lifeboat station is a visitor attraction in its own right as well as a lifesaving service, therefore Local Plan policy E20 is also applicable to the development, which states that development will be permitted subject to there being no adverse impacts on any heritage interests and nearby residents, the proposals are sensitive in scale and that the site is accessible.

There are also a number of relevant policies within the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan. Policy 20, Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities and Assets, specifically applies to the Lifeboat premises, and is similar in its aspirations to local plan policy RC6.

The lifeboat station sits within the 'Eastern Town' area of The Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan, with one of the overarching aims for the plan being to retain the lifeboat station. Development should reflect the river estuary ambience and the maritime heritage of the site, as per policy 24 of the neighbourhood plan, and retain safe access to the sea.

The proposal to extend the lifeboat station therefore would be deemed to be acceptable in principle given that the facilities are designed to improve the existing service to the local community and visitors to Sidmouth, will provide an enhanced visitor attraction and is in keeping with the maritime heritage of the east end of Sidmouth seafront.

Design and Appearance

The extension is conceived as a third gabled form which reflects the architectural form of the existing building, but the lower ridge means the extension is subservient to the main double height lifeboat hall. The extension infills some of the currently empty space between the lifeboat station and the water sports centre, infilling the existing fragmented urban grain, and improving the frontage towards the esplanade. The proposed built form also echoes the nearby Drill Hall.

The indicative perspective elevations submitted show a relatively restrained palette of materials to reflect those of the existing building, with render to the ground floor, coloured horizontal cladding to the first floor and a slate roof. The large gable window to the crew room provides an interesting feature as well as being useful operationally. It would be advantageous from the perspective of visitors to the seafront if the garage door to the Sea Rider could be partially glazed to allow glimpses into the boat even when the doors are closed. The proposed materials reflect the fishing and coastal heritage of the site and would provide an attractive addition to the townscape and the conservation area. Given that this area of Eastern Town is identified within the neighbourhood plan as a distinct character area of The Esplanade it is right that the proposals identify in architectural terms with the maritime history of the site rather than the more ornamental regency terraces to the west of the site. The Conservation

Area appraisal states that development in the Eastern Town area will need very careful management to avoid spoiling the authentic working / fishing end of The Esplanade, so any detailed proposals will need to have consideration to both the aesthetics and the longevity of the proposed materials and detailing given the very exposed nature of the site.

The view along York Terrace, looking east along the seafront is identified as a key public viewpoint in both the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan and the Sidmouth Conservation Area Appraisal.



The sketch perspective submitted shows the ridge being lower than the existing main boathouse ridge, therefore there would be no perceptible difference to the long range views along The Esplanade. There are no listed buildings immediately adjacent the lifeboat station, however the existing lifeboat station is seen in the context of several listed buildings along The Esplanade, therefore proposals will have to be mindful of the need to preserve the setting of the distinctive regency architecture.

The sketch perspective indicates a limited number of photovoltaic panels to the south facing roof slopes. Whilst in general the use of renewable energy technology is welcomed in policy terms under Strategy 38 – Sustainable Design and Construction of the East Devon Local Plan, should panels be placed on the existing west facing roof slopes this would have to be balanced against the other policy requirements in relation to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, the setting of the listed buildings and any impacts upon views into the area.

Flood risk assessment

The existing lifeboat station sits within Flood Zone 3 therefore a site-specific flood risk assessment will be required to accompany any application for development on the site, as per the NPPF, the East Devon Local Plan Policy EN21 – River and Coastal Flooding, and the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Policy 22.

A sequential test would not be required as the proposals would be classed as ‘minor development’ as defined in the PPG as they are for a non-residential extension with a footprint of less than 250 square metres. Similarly, the exception test would also not be required given that the proposals are for minor development. However, the NPPF still expects the proposals to demonstrate that the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient and any residual risk can be safely managed.

Summary

Subject to a detailed flood risk assessment being carried out, officers consider that the principles of an extension to the existing building would be acceptable in policy terms as set out in the East Devon Local Plan and the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan.

Any detailed proposals would need to consider the impacts upon the view along The Esplanade as identified in the conservation area appraisal and the Sid Valley Neighbourhood plan, and be of a sufficient quality to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area and the setting of nearby listed buildings along the esplanade. Given that the proposals are to improve an existing community amenity which relates to the site's fishing and maritime heritage, subject to the detailed design of the proposals this could be viewed favourably by officers in the event that a formal application is submitted for consideration.

Should you wish to submit an application, below is a list of applicable validation requirements (based upon the information submitted within the pre-application submission), and a list of relevant planning policies that are likely to be material to East Devon District Council's consideration of any formal application relating to the development of the project.

Finally, I must advise that the views expressed within this email are informal only and are not binding on the Council in the event that the application is submitted. This will ultimately be determined on its own merits taking into account the comments of statutory consultees, interested third parties and the policies laid out in both the adopted East Devon Local Plan and made Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan, as well as other policy guidance, including the NPPF. Nevertheless, I trust that this advice will be of assistance to you.

Validation requirements

Fee

Application form and relevant ownership certificates

Site location plan at 1:1250

Existing and proposed site plan 1:200 or 1:500

Existing and proposed elevations 1:50 or 1:100

Existing and proposed floor plans 1:50 or 1:100

Existing and proposed roof plans 1:50 or 1:100

Flood risk assessment

Preliminary Ecological Assessment report / protected species surveys

Heritage statement

Drainage Assessment form

Relevant Local Planning Policies and Guidance

East Devon Local Plan 2013 - 2031

Strategy 6 – Development within Built-Up Area Boundaries

Strategy 26 – Development at Sidmouth

Strategy 38- Sustainable Design and Construction

Strategy 44 – Undeveloped Coast and Coastal Preservation Area

Strategy 48 – Local Distinctiveness in the Built Environment

D1 – Design and local distinctiveness

EN10 – Conservation Area

EN21 – River and Coastal Flooding

E20 – Provision of Visitor Attractions

RC6 – Local Community Facilities

Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2032

Policy 1 - Sid Valley Development Principles

Policy 2 – Views

Policy 7 - Local Distinctiveness

Policy 20 – Protection and Enhancements of Community Facilities and Assets

Policy 22 – Eastern Town Redevelopment

Policy 23 - Eastern Town Access

Policy 24 – Eastern Town Maritime Heritage

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

Kind regards

Jill

Jill Himsworth RIBA

Planning Officer (Central Planning Team)

East Devon District Council

planningcentral@eastdevon.gov.uk

Direct: 01395 571596

Switchboard: 01404 515616

www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Blackdown House, Border Road,

Heathpark Industrial Estate,

Honiton, EX14 1EJ



Appendix D – Floor Risk Assessment (attached separately)

Appendix E – Preliminary Roost and Nest Assessment (attached separately).