

Appendix 6:

Policy on Siting and use of Containers

1. Shipping containers are useful: they are durable, secure, vermin proof, waterproof, quickly installed, do not require elaborate foundations and are available on the island relatively cheaply. In fact if you want a specification for a good general purpose storage shed you will have difficulty improving on them - except for their appearance: they are not pretty and they are bulky in the scale of domestic buildings. They are also sometimes painted in bright colours and tend to look shabby because they have been at sea. If sited indiscriminately they can damage the visual amenity of an area and the domestic amenity of nearby properties.

2. This policy is designed to guide the public and the planning process when making decisions on proposals to site and use containers. In view of their usefulness and availability, the clear intention is that the siting and use of containers should be permitted wherever it is right to do so; but there will be sites where no container should be permitted and others – probably most - where some work will be needed to make the siting and use acceptable. Such work will be required by planning conditions attached to the Development Permission.

3. For the purposes of this policy the containers under discussion are the standard steel shipping containers 20ft or 10ft long by 8ft wide and 8ft-6ins high. Containers not of these basic dimensions are unlikely to be available on the island and applications to site them will be considered individually.

4. The siting and use of a container, once the container has ceased to be used as a mobile container, requires Development Permission in the same way as any other storage building, with the difference that it will not generally require approval under the Building Regulations because there are no structural issues. (They would require Building Regulations approval if they were to be adapted for use as living accommodation.)

5. The *use* that might be made of a container also has the potential to harm domestic amenity – pursuing noisy activities from a container near to someone else's house is obviously undesirable. For the purposes of this policy, when Development Permission is granted for the siting of a container its deemed use will be that of storage unless another use is stated in the application.

6. For the purposes of this policy a container used as temporary builder's storage during construction of a building will be regarded as a mobile container and will therefore not require Development Permission. It will be a matter of fact and degree whether any particular container fits this description: if it remains on a site for more than two years it is unlikely to do so and will instead require Development Permission. If it is intended that the container will become permanent when the building is finished, Development Permission will be required and it should be applied for with the application for the new building and shown on the site plan.

7. In recognition of the fact that there are many containers on St Helena which have been sited without Development Permission, and in view of the fact that they can deteriorate and become an eyesore, action against the siting of an existing unauthorised container will not generally be taken within 2 years of the date of adoption of this policy, but thereafter it may be required to be concealed or removed unless Permission is applied for and granted. Equally, a container that has been allowed to deteriorate and become a conspicuous wreck may be the subject of an Amenity order under the Planning Ordinance that may require its removal.

8. Planning policies in the Land Development Control Plan will apply to containers as they do to all other development. For example, in the Green Heartland and in the Coastal Zone containers will be permitted only if they comply with the policies of planning principle specific to those areas.

9. The fact that the applicant owns or controls the land will not be regarded as an over-riding reason for permission to be granted for a container where it would not otherwise comply with this policy.

10. Containers that are remote from buildings are likely to be more conspicuous in the landscape than if they are seen with buildings. In general therefore, containers will not be permitted where they are more than 10m. from a building nor will they be permitted in front of the forwardmost part of the nearest building in the direction of a public road.

11. A container sited close to someone else's dwelling or directly in the principal view from it is likely to damage the enjoyment of that dwelling. In general therefore, containers will not be permitted where they are within 10m. of another person's dwelling nor closer to another person's dwelling than the applicant's dwelling. Nor generally will they be permitted where they would materially affect the principal view from another person's dwelling. In considering whether they would materially affect the principal view, consideration will be given to:

- a) the height and distance in relation to the principal view
- b) whether the container can be disguised by cladding
- c) whether the container can be partially or wholly hidden by fencing or planting
- d) whether an existing eyesore will be removed as part of the proposal to site the container.

12. In all cases where a container is to be sited within 10m of a dwelling (including the applicant's dwelling):

- a) it is to be provided with a roof of the same angle of pitch as the dwelling and of the same colour and finish.
- b) the height of the eaves of the roof is to be not higher than the eaves of the dwelling, which may mean that the ground level of the container has to be reduced.
- c) the walls of the container are to be painted or clad to match the walls of the dwelling and so maintained.

- 13). Where a container is proposed to be sited adjacent to a building that is not a dwelling but where the container will be readily visible from a public road, the same requirements will apply as to a container sited adjacent to a dwelling.
- 14). Where a container is to be sited on an employment or industrial site of any description it is to be painted grey and so maintained.
- 15). In residential areas only one container will generally be permitted per dwelling but exceptionally, where a business is run from the dwelling, up to three containers may be permitted subject to the effect on the landscape and domestic amenity. In no case will permission be granted for containers stacked vertically.
- 16). A better solution for the siting of containers in residential areas than individually in gardens is the creation of a dedicated container park. Where a container park has been established, individually sited containers will not generally be permitted within a radius of 1km of the container park. Containers sited on a container park are to be painted grey on all visible faces and so maintained and any proposal for a container park will be permitted only subject to appropriate landscaping.

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(Minor revisions April 2013 to take account of
the new Land Development Control Plan 2012)