

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA DECEMBER 2025

APPLICATION	2025/55 – Restoration of Bamboo Grove
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	9 July 2025
APPLICANT	Gilbert Legg
PARCEL	SBE0178
LOCALITY	Bamboo Grove, Sandy Bay
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	None
CURRENT USE	Existing Dwelling (disrepair)
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>The Independent</i> Newspaper on 18 July 2025▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	1 August 2025
REPRESENTATIONS	Two (One was a 'holding objection' that has been withdrawn)
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

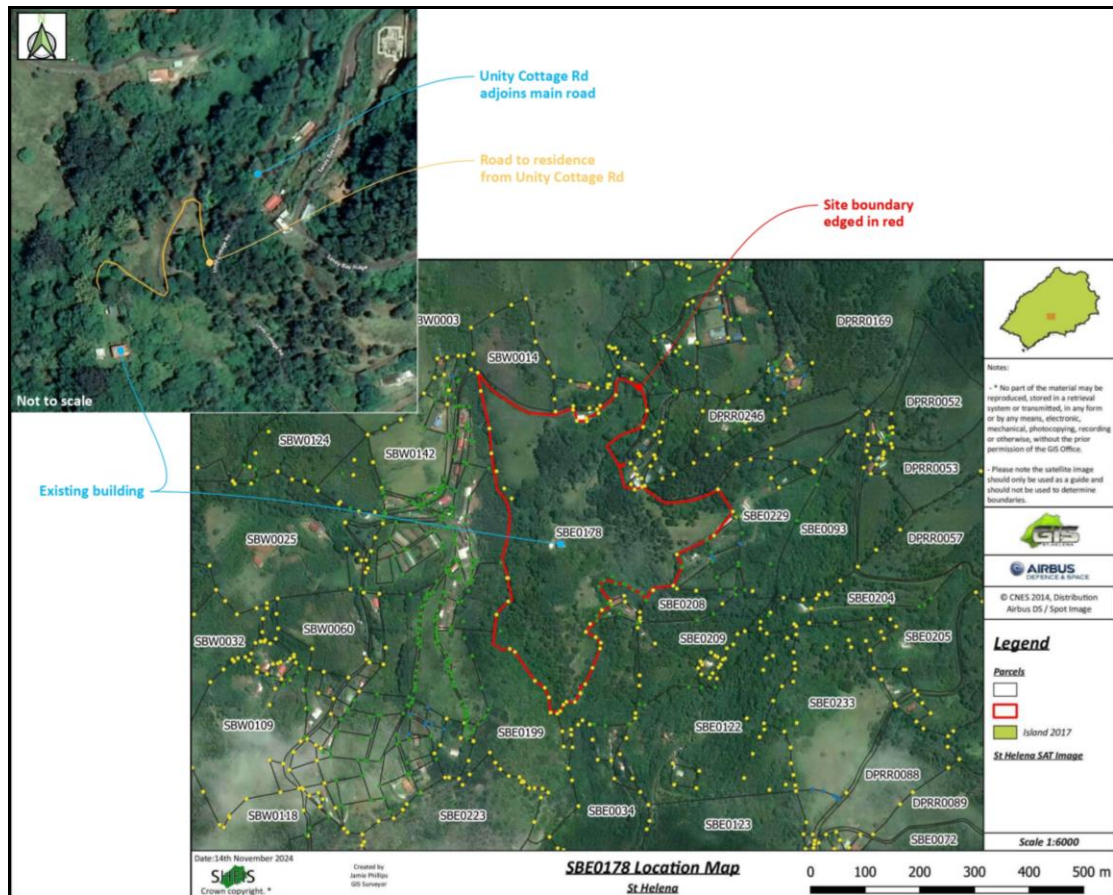
1. Sewage & Water Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Response
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Division	No Objection
6. Environmental Management	No Objection
7. Environmental Health	No Response
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. St Helena Police Services	No Response
10. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	No Objection
11. Economic Development	No Objection
12. National Trust	No Response
13. Sure SA Ltd	No Objection
14. Heritage Society	"Holding" Objection
15. Maritime	Not Applicable

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

This plot is located at *Bamboo Grove*, Sandy Bay East. The existing house is a Grade II Listed building as per the *Crallan Report* [1974]. The site is designated within the Intermediate Zone and has no conservation area restrictions.

Diagram 1: Location/ Boundary Map



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Applicant proposes to undertake a complete renovation of the Grade II Listed property due to it currently being in a state of disrepair for a number of years. The proposal aims to restore the building to its former condition as one of the prominent heritage assets on Saint Helena Island and most notably at Sandy Bay.

The Applicant's objective is to preserve the building's original architectural detail, historic fabric, and plan form, whilst also considering time, cost, and practicability.

Located within a secluded area of Sandy Bay with minimal visibility outside the application site, *Bamboo Grove* is surrounded by a substantial amount of land owned

by the Developer. The restoration of *Bamboo Grove* will offer new value to the Built Heritage and in particular, contribute to restoring the historic environment at Sandy Bay.

The heritage asset information obtained from three reports at the Museum, including; *History of the Development of the Island*, [1972] by Percy Teale, *The Crallan Report* [1974] by Hugh Crallan and *Historic Environment Record* [2012] by Ben Jeffs, collectively describe *Bamboo Grove* like so—

“The site is not prominent but can be seen from higher viewpoints”... “The house carries a stone inscribed; “I. A. 1808” ” and “The Barnes map of 1811 shows a J. Alexander in possession of the house. The Cocks map of 1804 does not show a property at this point and the architectural style would suggest it was built circa 1808...” as per the inscription. However, one report suggests that “...the date stone refers to the rear extension, the main block of the property being somewhat earlier”.

“A substantially complete planter’s house...” and “...a moderately high status East India Company period dwelling with one of the most complete collections of historic joinery and interior features on Saint Helena. High archaeological potential (standing and subsurface)”. “...Possibly the most complete Georgian building on the island”.

The revised Historic Impact Assessment submitted by the Developer on 31 October 2025, outlines the main Scope of Works as follows:

- Failed and deteriorated lintels will be exposed to assess their condition and will be replaced with reinforced concrete (RC) lintels with least damage to existing masonry to match existing.
- Rebuild, rake, point, and plaster/ render wall sections with lime mortar where necessary to match existing.
- Renew deteriorated roof structure to match existing. Existing roof level to remain and structural members to be accessed and renewed like-for-like where practicable. Corrugated roofing sheets to be renewed to match existing.
- Repair and redecorate deteriorated timber vertical sliding sash windows where possible with drawings provided by Mr David Taylor (see Diagram 5).
- Renew deteriorated timber doors to match previous/existing.
- Re-establish porch using blockwork to match previous/existing.*
- Replace deteriorated timber ground floor with concrete floor similar to rooms at rear of building.*
- Replace ground floor timber partition wall with blockwork to match previous/ existing.*
- Renew deteriorated timber first floor to match previous/existing.
- Renew first floor timber partition walls to match previous/existing.

- Renew timber stairs to match previous/existing.

Developer's Justification for Use of Concrete & Blockwork (*as opposed to original timber*)

** Replacing timber elements with concrete and blockwork in a heritage building can offer significant practical benefits, especially when structural integrity and long-term performance are priorities.*

Concrete ground floors provide superior stability and rigidity compared to timber, reducing movement and vibration that could compromise the preservation of historical features. They are also more durable, resistant to rot, moisture, and pests, and offer better fire resistance—an essential consideration in heritage conservation. Concrete floors can improve thermal and acoustic insulation and support heavier loads, making them suitable for modern usage while requiring less maintenance over time.

Similarly, replacing the timber porch with concrete blockwork enhances structural robustness and weather resistance. Timber porches are often exposed to the elements and can deteriorate quickly, whereas concrete blockwork offers greater longevity and reduced upkeep. It also improves safety which is particularly important if the porch serves as a primary access point.

For the ground floor internal timber partitions, switching to concrete blockwork can significantly improve fire safety and acoustic separation between rooms. Concrete partitions are more durable and less susceptible to warping or damage, especially in buildings with fluctuating humidity or temperature.

Note, the existing first floor in the building is not safe for full accessibility. However, photographic evidence of the building will be obtained throughout the renovation process.

Officers Comment:

It should also be noted that revised drawings were received on 31 October 2025 (*as per diagrams below*), to show the retention of the chimney and roof design and also included new detailed drawings of proposed timber sash windows, as depicted in Diagram 5.

Both the *Heritage Society* and *National Trust* were contacted for consultation during the Planning process. There has been dialogue with *Mr David Taylor* of the *Heritage Society* which has contributed to the revised main scope of works as outlined above. *Mr David Taylor* has also provided detailed drawings to aid accurate repair and replacement of the existing windows to ensure that replacements with timber, if beyond repair, are copied precisely from the originals.

The *Heritage Society* have indicated that they will work closely with the Developer to bring the restoration to a successful conclusion.

Diagram 2: Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Revised Version A2 – 31 October 2025)

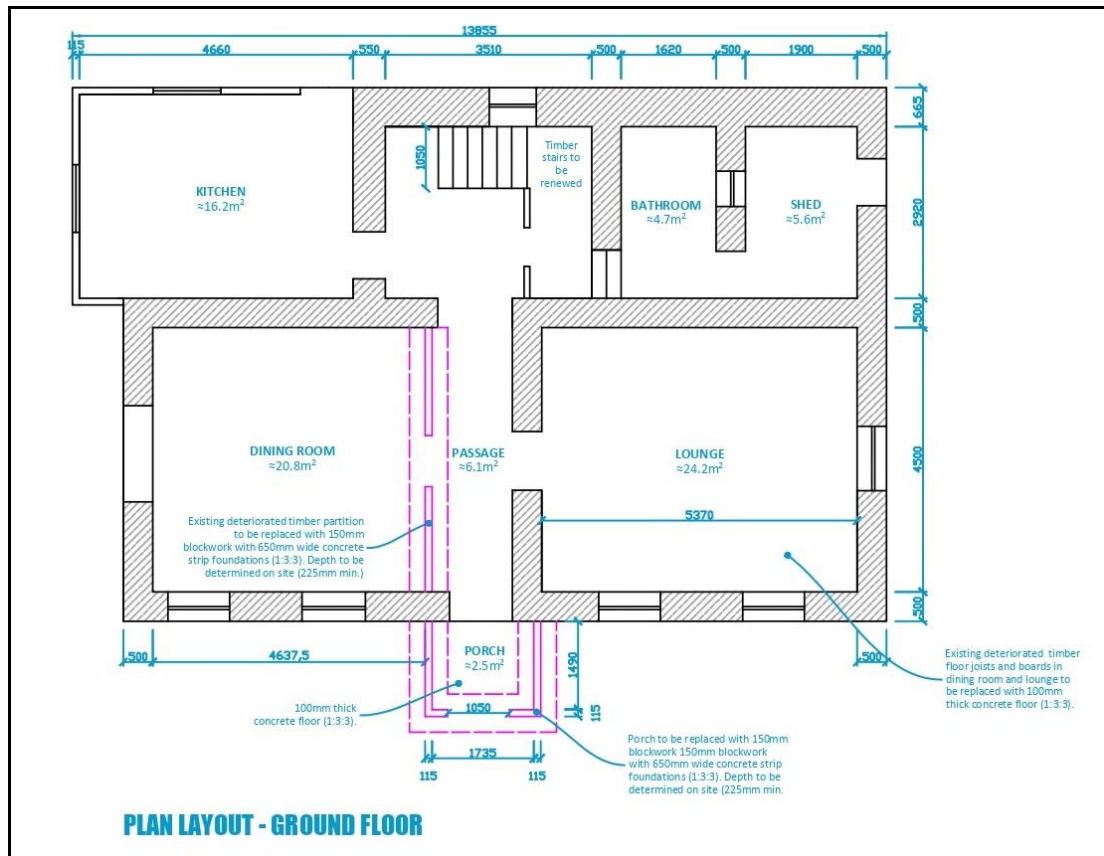


Diagram 3: Proposed First Floor Plan (Revised Version A2 – 31 October 2025)

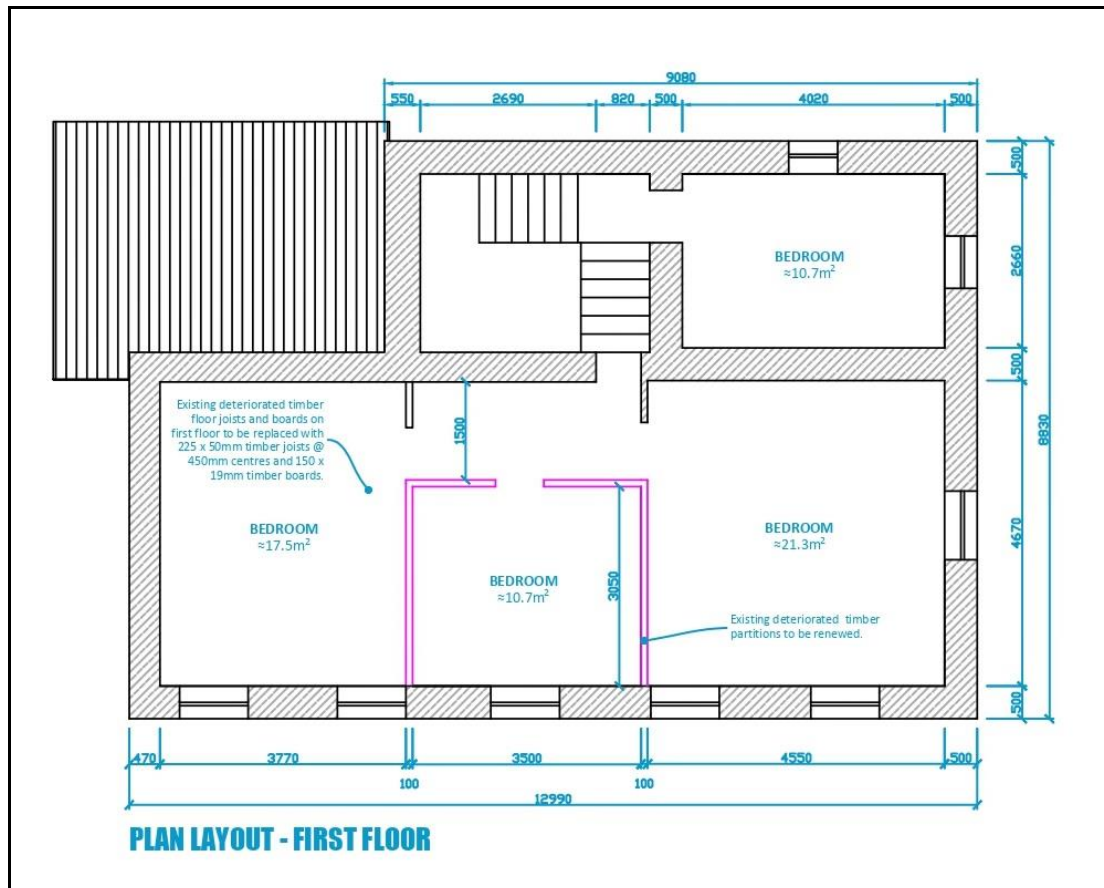


Diagram 4: Elevation Plans (Revised Version A2 – 31 October 2025)

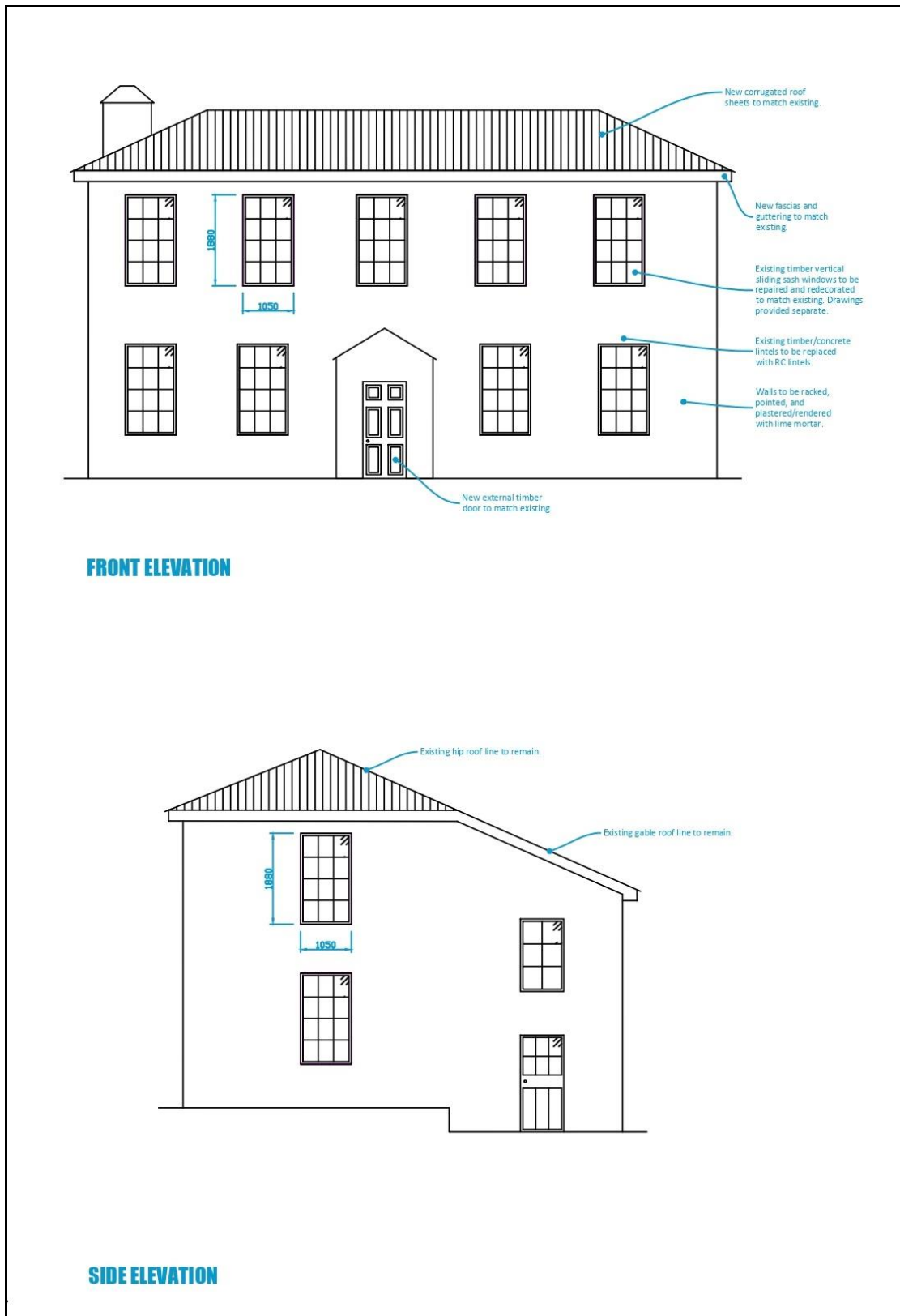


Diagram 5: Detailed Plans Showing Proposed Sash Windows

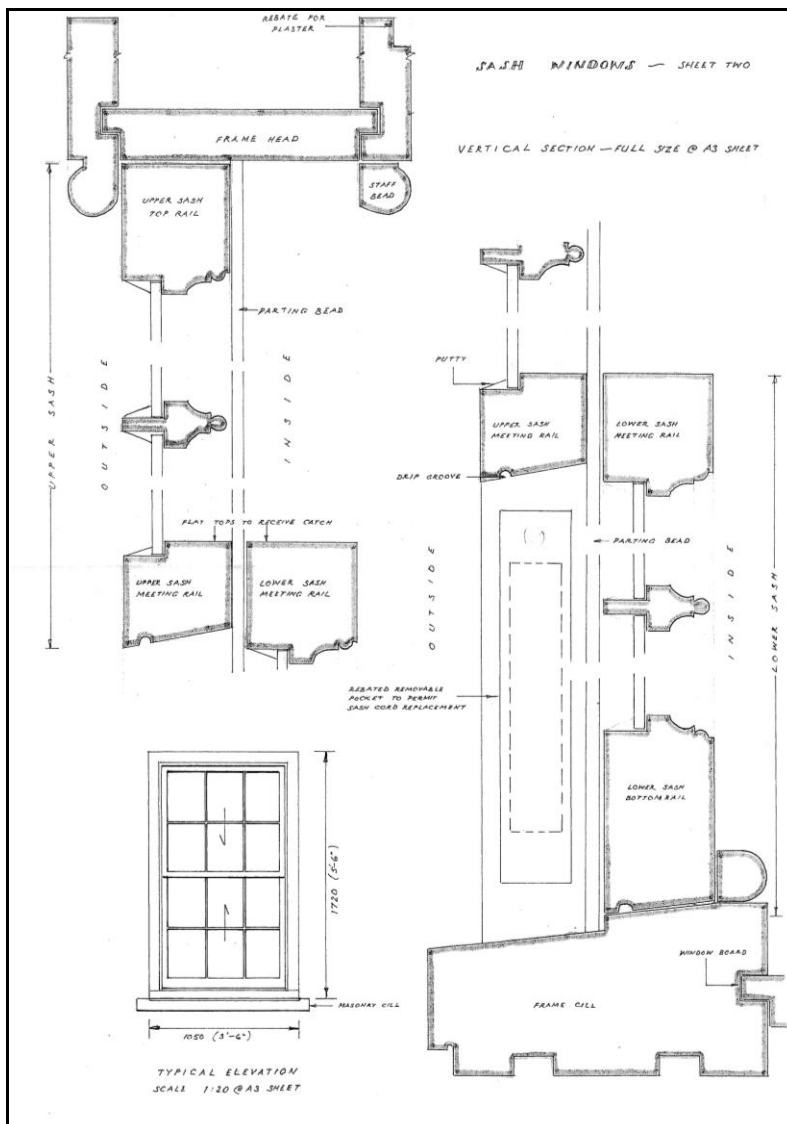
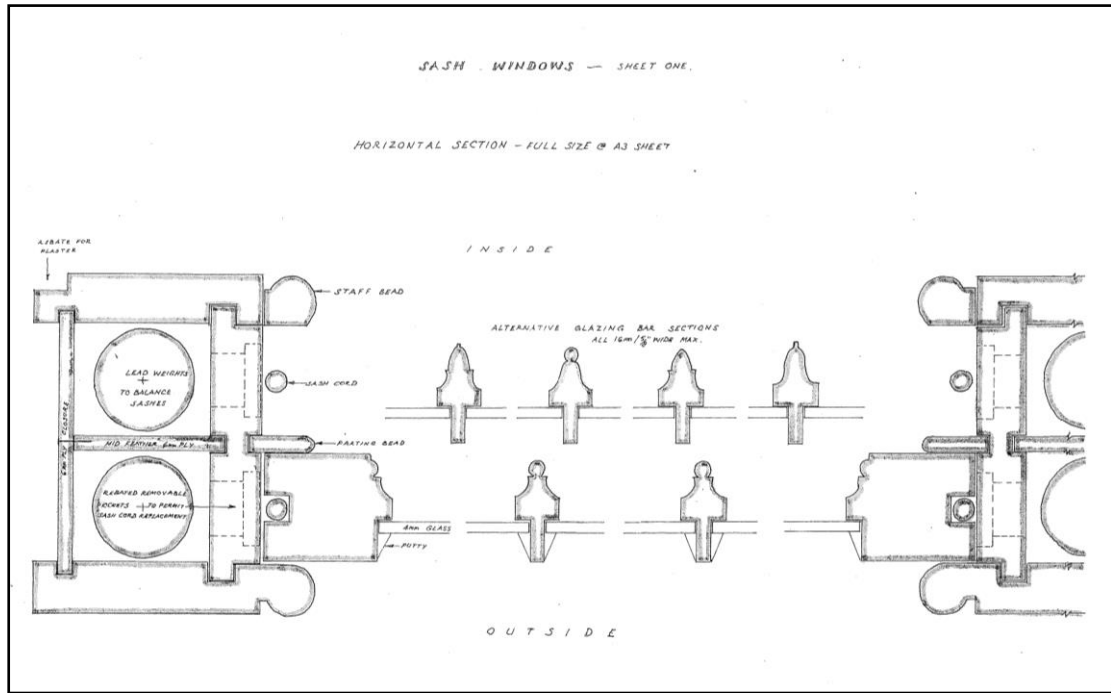


Diagram 6: Photograph of an Inscription/ Date Stone in the Wall of *Bamboo Grove*

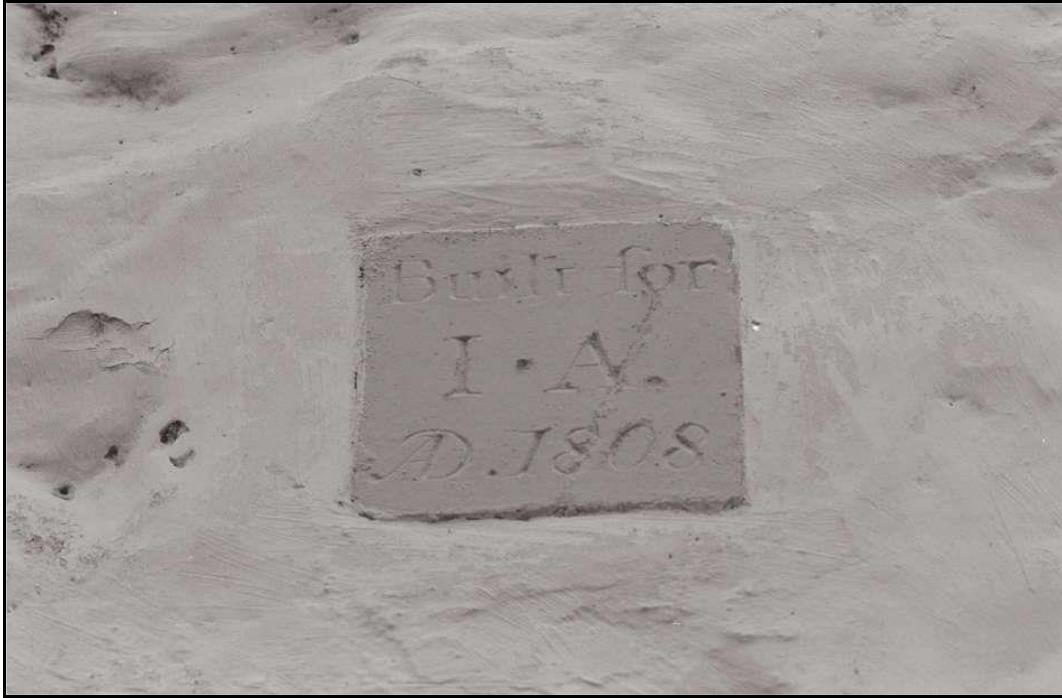


Diagram 7: Photographs of Front Elevation of *Bamboo Grove*

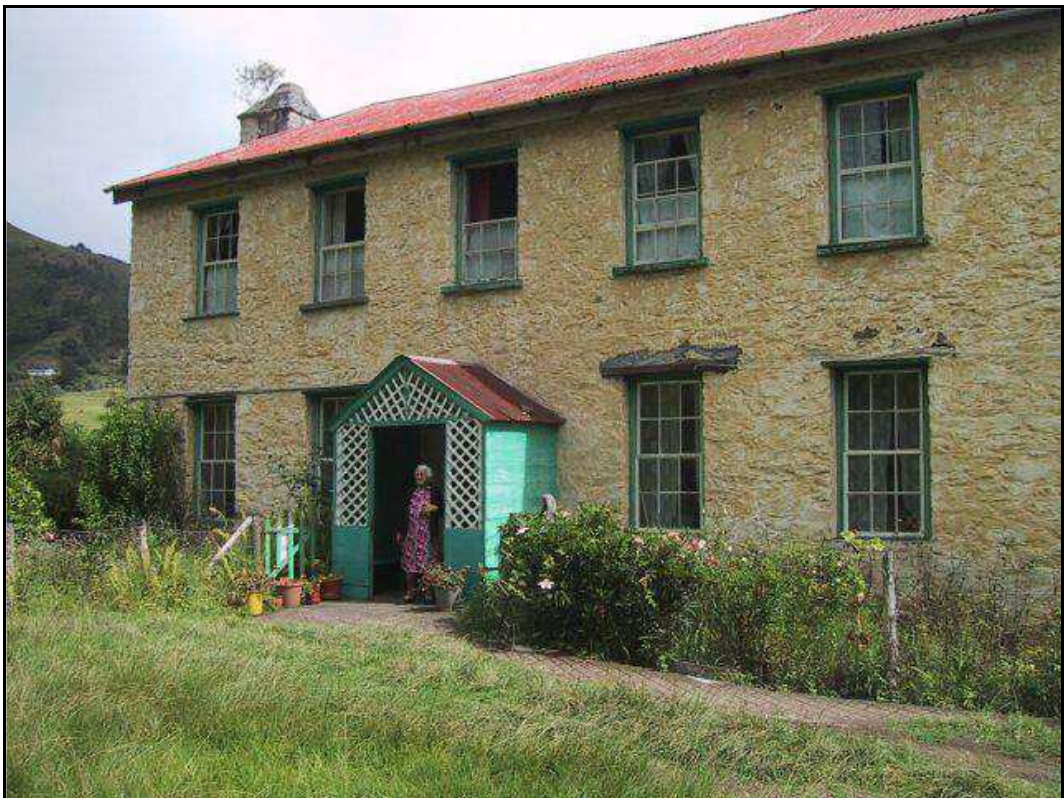
Photograph 1 (*circa 1970s*)



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4 (more recently)



Photograph 5 - Existing Deteriorated Floors



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There was an initial “holding objection” from the *Heritage Society* which was formally withdrawn following a discussion between them and the developer on 23 August 2025, as confirmed via e-mail on the same date as detailed in the extract below.

There was also a Representation received from a member of the public as detailed further below—

The Heritage Society – Holding Objection

“This is submitted as a holding objection only, pending discussion and agreement as to all of the details in the coming days, after which it is anticipated that the objection will be removed, to be confirmed. The Heritage Society welcomes the dialogue already offered by the agent on behalf of the applicant.”

E-mail Received 23 August 2025 – Withdrawal of Holding Objection

“Further to the above application, in respect of the Grade II listed building Bamboo Grove, Sandy Bay, I met the applicant and agent at the building this morning and I am happy to report on behalf of the Heritage Society that there is agreement as to the restoration of the house.

The holding objection submitted on behalf of the Society is therefore withdrawn and the Society will work closely with the applicant and his agent to bring the restoration to a successful conclusion.

The building has been very seriously damaged by termites and the essence now is to clear administrative hurdles immediately, to enable the work to commence as soon as possible, to arrest further damage.

Specifically, it has been agreed that the windows and all other joinery are to be repaired wherever practicable and otherwise replaced, in timber, with details to match the existing precisely. To facilitate this, I have provided drawings of windows with sections drawn at full size. Failed and damaged lintels will be exposed to assess their actual condition and decide the best means of reinstating them with least damage to existing masonry. The roof structure will be opened up to assess the condition of structural components and replacement as necessary, and the roof covering will be replaced matching the existing.

With this agreement in place, as far as I can see the only remaining elements for planning consideration are the internal alterations to install the bathroom etc., none of which are contentious. Accordingly, it would be appropriate for the development permission to be cleared as soon as possible, with conditions requiring the joinery to be repaired or replaced as in the paragraph above and all work to external masonry to be done in lime mortar rather than Portland cement.”

Representation 1 – Member of the Public – 01 August 2025

“I am delighted with the aims and intentions of this restoration project and suggest that every help should be given to achieve it. I also applaud the inclusion of a Heritage Impact Statement, citing such inspiring examples as Woodcot.

I was involved with design consultancy work at Woodcot as well as other successful restoration projects achieved at Rock Rose, Teutonic, Percy’s in Napoleon St and Toby’s Cottage at the Briars, and most recently with proposals for restoration at Darlings in Napoleon Street.

Unfortunately it is clear from the application drawings that the stated aims of this restoration project cannot be achieved without considerable further conservation input. Indeed in its current state the proposals are likely to damage the character the applicant seeks to enhance.

Understanding the principal characteristics of a building is key to any successful restoration and for that a complete set of architectural drawings, as existing, is an important starting point. No such drawings have been presented as part of this application.

The photographs in the Impact Statement of the front of Bamboo Grove do not correlate with the proposed restored elevation in the application drawings. There is a missing two feet at the east end which includes the chimney. Is it proposed to remove the chimney? If so, it will adversely impact the front left room, details of which are shown in another Impact Statement photograph. The same picture shows the existing floor condition. The application proposes a new replacement concrete floor. That is a major change to the character of the building. Is there a cellar or semi-basement in this building? The drawings do not clarify this. There are many more uncertainties raised throughout the proposals as a result of the lack of drawing details.

The biggest question is in the new roof which is not a restoration but a redesign. There is a proposed overall hipped roof, but the current roof is hipped only over the front half, with a mono pitch over the rear half. This proposed new roof will completely change the proportions and therefore the character of Bamboo Grove. There is however no mention of a new roof design in the application.

The use of reinforced concrete in the proposal is again not clear. Such materials are not normally associated with house restoration projects relating to historic buildings unless there are special circumstances. None have been cited. It is not clear whether the concrete ‘lintel’ at eaves level is intended as a ring beam, wall plate or just as window lintels.

The proposed new internal block wall has details of its footings shown. However there is no mention of how this relates to the existing suspended timber floor.

In terms of use, it is not clear how convenient it will be to have one single bathroom on the ground floor to service all four bedrooms on the first floor.

To summarise. There is a great potential in this historic house restoration as expressed in the Heritage Impact Statement but it will require much more consideration to achieve it.”

Agent’s Response to Representation 1 – 20 August 2025:

“As alluded to in the application, Bamboo Grove is currently in a state of disrepair and not all areas of the building are safely accessible; notably the first floor. Therefore, the survey and drawings are a reflectance of what can be safely and accurately recorded.

Please see below technical points of clarification:

The chimney to the dining room will remain and be restored to match the existing as much as possible.

The proposed floor level of the ground floor will be constructed to match the existing floor level as much as possible.

As mentioned, the roof is currently inaccessible and cannot be safely and accurately recorded. I will further clarify with the applicant on their proposed roof design from a constructability and functionality standpoint. It is the applicant's intention to replicate the existing roof as much as possible without constructing future defects that come with a non-uniform roof such as an adjoining gable and mono pitch roof including water ingress from capillary action, structural deficiencies from wind, etc.

The proposed internal block wall will be polythitic (separate) to the first floor from a structural standpoint; as with the existing partition wall.

Discussions are also taking place regarding the restoring the existing timber lintels - and how/ if this will comply with Building Control.”

[Officer Comments: Revised Plans were subsequently received in October 2025; it is these plans which form the basis of the planning assessment and recommendation]

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The relevant policies of the Land Development Control Plan (LDCP 2012 - 2022) that are applicable in the assessment of the proposed development are set out below:

- Built Heritage: Policies BH1 a), BH2

- Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1 (a, b, f, g and h)
- Tourism: Policy T2 d)
- Housing Policy H1
- Water: Policy W2
- Sewage, Storm and Drainage: Policies SD1 (b, c), SD3, SD4 and SD7

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

In evaluating this development proposal, the full restoration of *Bamboo Grove* is considered a positive proposition to fully restore a Grade II Listed Building. It would also bring a dwelling back into residential use in support of providing housing to meet the needs of the Island in line with Policy H1.

The Scope of Works include a comprehensive list of repairs and/ or replacements and new materials being introduced such as concrete floors and concrete blockwork instead of existing timber partitioning and original timber porch. The Developer has provided a *Justification for Use of Concrete & Blockwork* as outlined under the *Proposed Development* section far above.

As outlined in the Historic Impact Assessment, the Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the need for sensitive considerations for a restoration project of this nature and their willingness to work with, and confer with other knowledgeable professionals in the field, in order to achieve the best possible outcome is seen as a favourable stance.

The Applicant and their Agent are working closely with *The Heritage Society* in particular, as well as being open to guidance and advice from others who have the knowledge and experience with similar restoration projects on Island, in a bid to bring the restoration to a successful conclusion, which is also seen as highly advantageous.

The intention is for the restored building to be the Applicant's principal place of residence with the potential of being open to tourists/ visitors to the Island, by offering tours and events, which would enhance the local area and St. Helena Island as a whole. Therefore, both a private and public benefit would be realised.

This restoration intervention will combat deterioration of the heritage asset and further loss of its historic fabric, which would continue otherwise, and will retain its future in St Helena's historic environment.

This restoration project is considered to bring a historic asset back into a viable use and would result in a Grade II Listed building being fully revived with the opportunity to retain its future in St Helena's historic built environment for generations to come.

Overall, whilst the development still has some restoration works that cannot be fully investigated at present, due to safety reasons/ inaccessibility, with respect to determining whether certain elements can be repaired or needs to be replaced, it is evident however, that the Applicant is demonstrating compliance and is willing to do what is necessary to restore the Grade II Listed building in line with its original

features and materials as much as possible and practicable, whilst also proposing alternatives moving forward. In particular, use of concrete and blockwork in some aspects of the restoration, as it offers greater durability and sustainability, which will in turn have significantly reduced cost implications for future maintenance.

To conclude, the development proposal is considered to be in compliance with the relevant policies as outlined, and therefore can be supported.