

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA JANUARY 2025

APPLICATION	2025/87 – Proposed Disabled Toilet
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	30 September 2025
APPLICANT	Baptist Church, Jamestown (Agent: Colin Williams)
PARCEL	SBW0062
LOCALITY	Baptist Church – Lower Sandy Bay
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Heritage Coast
CURRENT USE	Existing Baptist Church
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>The Sentinel</i> Newspaper on 9 October 2025.▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	23 October 2025
REPRESENTATIONS	None
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

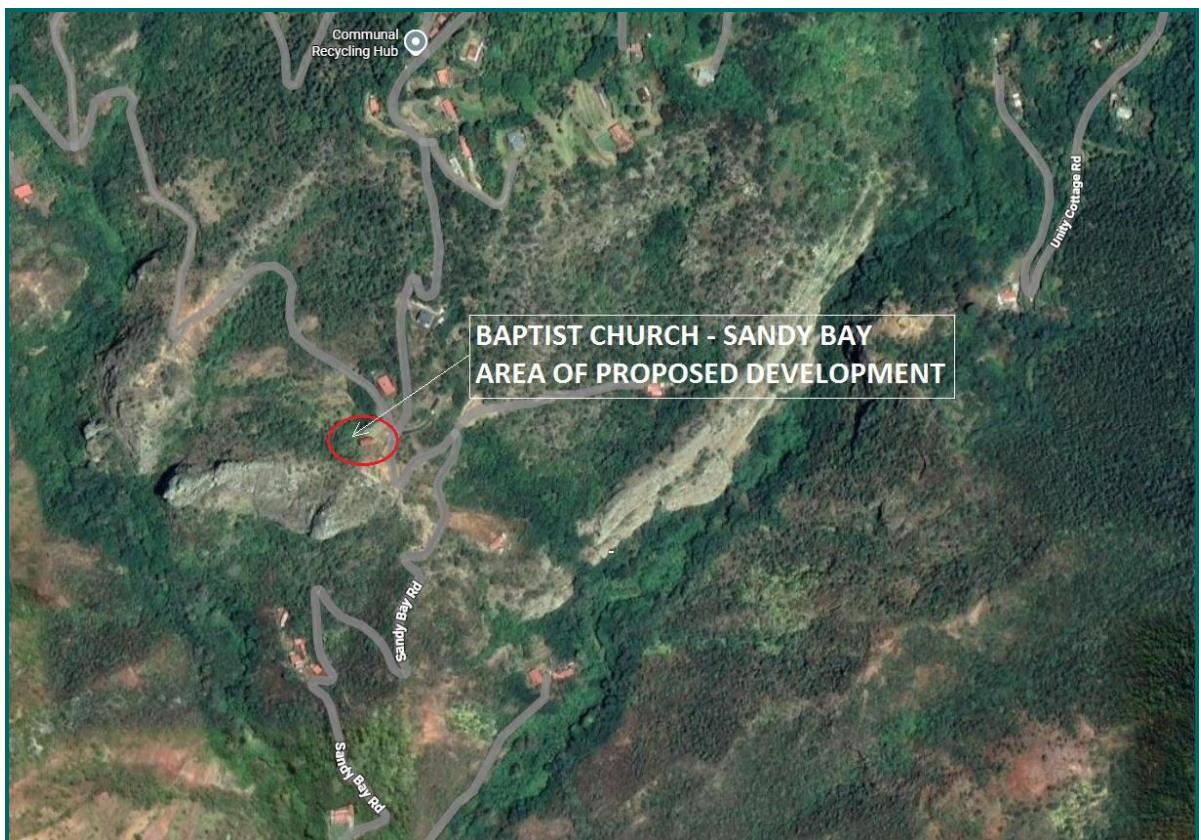
1. Sewage & Water Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Response
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
4. Roads Section	No Response
5. Property Division	No Objection
6. Environmental Management	No Objection
7. Environmental Health	No Response
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. St Helena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

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

This development site is at Lower Sandy Bay, where the plot is designated within the Intermediate Zone. The Baptist Church is a Grade III Listed Building. The site is not within a Conservation Area.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of Application

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a detached toilet facility to serve the existing Baptist Church located in the lower Sandy Bay District. The development is required to provide appropriate sanitary facilities for users of the church and to support its continued use as a community and place of worship.

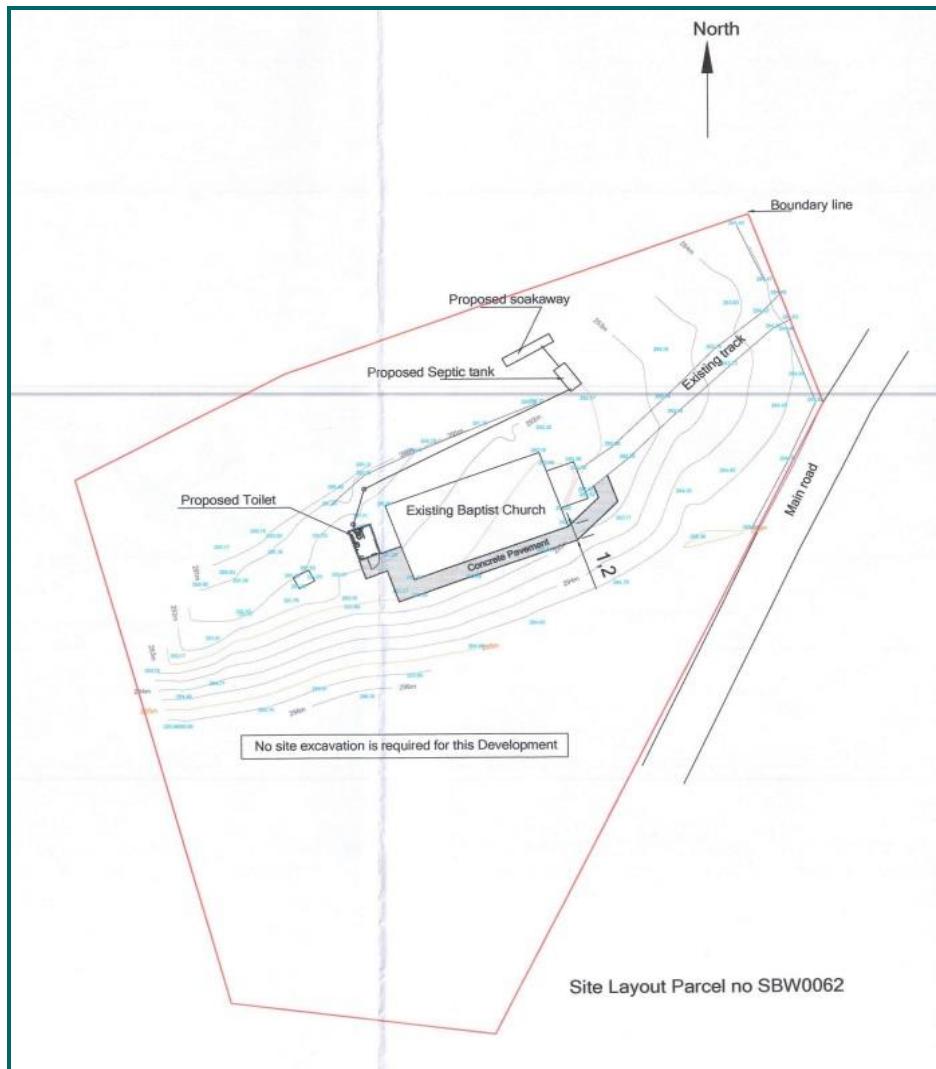
Site and Surroundings

The application site is within the curtilage of the Baptist Church, Sandy Bay. The church is a Grade III Listed Building, recognised for its historical, architectural, and cultural importance.

The surrounding area is mainly open but there are also some residential dwellings and community buildings along Sandy Bay Road. Within the application site, the land

immediately adjacent on the west side of the church is relatively level and suitable for the proposed development.

Diagram 2: Site Plan



Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal comprises the construction of a single-storey detached toilet building, located approximately 1.5 metres away from and to the west of the existing church building.

The proposed works include:

- Construction of a small toilet structure using traditional concrete blockwork with stone cladding to ensure the proposed development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the existing historic asset and its setting.
- Simple mono pitched roof formed using inverted box ribbed (IBR) metal roofing sheets
- Installation of a septic tank and soakaway drainage system, the size of which is determined by the results of a percolation test submitted with this

application. The position of the drainage system to the east of the existing church building allows for convenient access should the system require emptying by Connect St Helena.

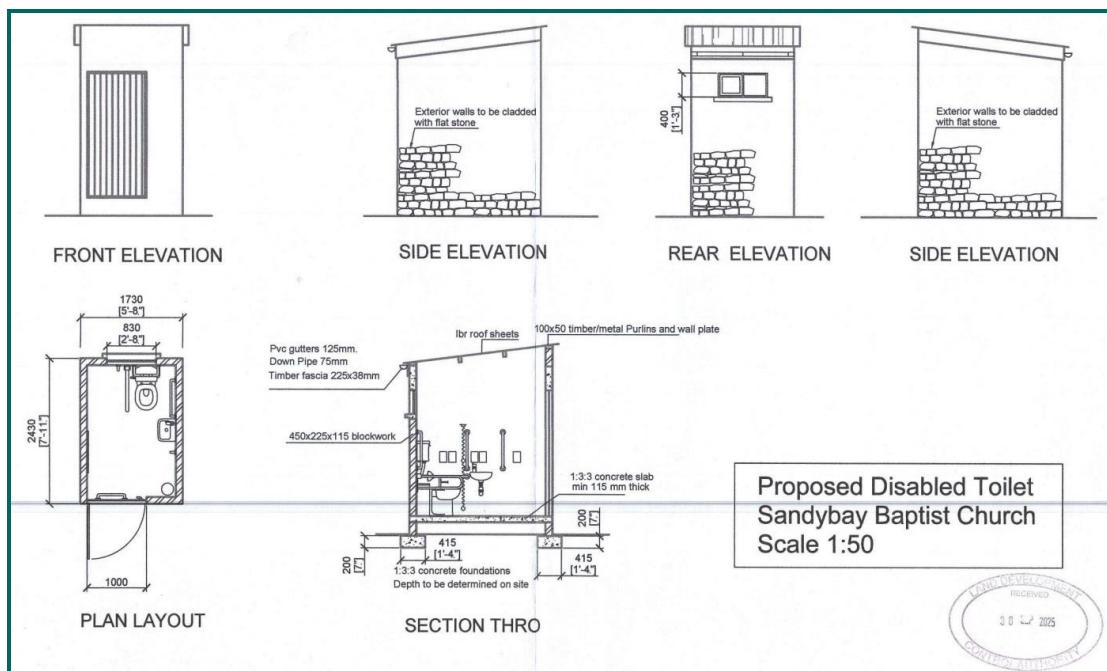
- Connection of plumbing and associated fittings required for the operation of the facility

The proposed toilet facility will not be physically attached to the listed church building. A new concrete pavement would be provided around the south of the Church to connect the existing access track to the proposed toilet.

Groundworks and Excavation

No site excavation is required for the proposed development.

Diagram 3: Plan, Elevations & Section Detail



Listed Building and Heritage Considerations

The Baptist Church is a Grade III Listed Building and is therefore afforded a level of protection under planning policy.

The proposal has been designed to ensure that:

- No alterations are made to the fabric of the listed building
- The toilet facility is detached and clearly subordinate in scale
- The location to the west, on the opposite side of the main access road preserves the setting, character, and visual prominence of the church

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There were no representations received from any members of the public. An objection and subsequent comment was made by Heritage Society.

Heritage Society: Objection – The building as proposed, with a mono-pitch roof and walls built of concrete blocks clad with thin stone which would resemble vertical crazy-paving, would be materially damaging to the appearance of the church in the landscape setting, where it forms one of the most treasured views on the island which deserves to be protected. The building should be redesigned to complement the architecture of the church rather than oppose it, using a ridged roof of the same angle of pitch as the church and walls built of stonework laid traditionally.

Additionally, experience in similar circumstances suggests that the proposed septic tank drainage is unlikely to perform satisfactorily therefore risking pollution and smell. Septic tanks require an adequate and consistent flow of sewage for the biological action to be established and maintained. In the nature of church attendance, the normal flow is likely to be small and events such as weddings and funerals then overwhelm it and flush undigested effluent through to the soakaway, particularly where a water-closet is proposed. A more satisfactory arrangement would be a modern composting toilet or an earth closet, to avoid the risk of pollution.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

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

- Intermediate Zone Policy IZ1 (a, b), IZ.4, IZ.5
- Built Heritage Policy BH1, BH2, BH3
- Social Infrastructure Policy SI1, SI.6, SI.12
- Sewerage and Strom Drainage SD1, SD.3, SD.7

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

Within the Intermediate Zone, the Development Control Plan supports development that is appropriate in scale and nature and which serves the needs of existing communities. The proposed toilet facility is directly related to the established use of the Church and would provide a facility that is suitable for use by people with disabilities, in line with Social Infrastructure Policies SI.6 and SI.12. The single toilet facility is modest in size and form, as such it does not represent an intensification of use beyond what is considered acceptable and would not be out of character in the area, in line with Intermediate Zone policies.

As a Grade III Listed Building, the Baptist Church is recognised as being of local heritage significance. The proposal has been designed to ensure that the historic character and setting of the Church is preserved. The toilet facility is detached,

located a short distance from the church, and is clearly subordinate to the principal building. No alterations are proposed to the fabric of the listed building itself. All works will be limited in extent and will not disturb the setting or foundations of the existing church building.

In response to the objection received from the Heritage Society, it is considered in relation to the proposed Stone Cladding that it is possible to match the traditional stone walls of the existing church with stone cladding. Regarding the proposed roof, a mono-pitch roof is appropriate for the scale of the proposed outbuilding to ensure that it visually subordinate to, and not competing with, the Listed Church. Regarding the proposed sewerage arrangements, a septic tank and soakaway is normally provided in remoter locations such as this and it is considered to be in line with relevant policies for sewerage. If the arrangement is found to be unsuitable it would be for the Church to provide other arrangements, as necessary.

The materials and simple design are appropriate and will not detract from the character or appearance of the church or its setting. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the built heritage policies of the Land Development Control Plan.

Having regard to all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed toilet building represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development. The proposal supports the continued use of an important community facility, respects the heritage value of the Grade III listed church, and complies with the Social Infrastructure, Intermediate Zone, Sewerage and Built Heritage policies of the Land Development Control Plan 2012.