

Planning Officer's Report - LDCA March 2026

APPLICATION	2026/06 – Proposed New Cemetery Extension
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	28 January 2026
APPLICANT	Bishop Dale Bowers, St Helena
PARCEL	SCOT0686
SIZE	0.867 acres (3,510 m ²)
LAND OWNER	Crown Land
LOCALITY	Nr Ex Radio Station/St Pauls Cathedral, St Pauls
ZONE	Intermediate Zone
CONSERVATION AREA	None
CURRENT USE	Vacant open space within St Paul's CDA
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Independent Newspaper on 30 January 2026▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	13 February 2026
REPRESENTATIONS	None
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Water Division	No Objection
2. Sewage Division	No Objection
3. Energy Division	No Objection
4. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
5. Roads Section	No Objection
6. Property Division	No Response
7. Heritage	No Objection (Comments)
8. Environmental Management	No Objection (Comments)

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Authorised by: Patricia Coyle (Chief Planning Officer)
Application: 2026/06

9. Health	No Objection
10. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
11. St Helena Police Services	No Response
12. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted
13. Trade and Investment	No Objection
14. SURE SA	No Objection
15. National Trust	No Objection

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

PLANNING BACKGROUND

A Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion was sought. The Opinion (Reference.: SCR/2025/04) was adopted on 29/08/2025 indicating that a EIA was not required to be submitted with the Development Application.

LOCALITY & ZONING

The site is situated south and east of St Paul's Cathedral (Grade I Listed Building) and mainly to the east of part of the existing St Paul's Cemetery. The site is also adjacent to St Paul's Vicarage (the Old School House) which is Grade III Listed. The application site is within the Intermediate Zone and also the designated St Pauls Comprehensive Development Area (CDA).

Site Description:

The site is rectangular in shape and just under one acre in size and stretches from the existing cemetery's boundary to the main road to the east.

There is an existing road access to the north of the proposed cemetery extension which links to the main road.

It is a mainly open grassed area with some small trees, shrubs and other vegetation. There is a slope down to the north across the whole application site.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Applicant proposes to use the site as burial ground (cemetery) as the current St Paul's Cemetery is full and there is a need on the Island to make provision for further burial grounds. The new burial ground forms part of the area which has been gifted from SHG Property (Crown Estates) and is the subject of a Governor Proclamation.

The proposal will provide over 600 additional burial plots. Each plot would be 2.15m long and 0.75m wide. It is proposed that plots would be 1m apart.

No details of any sealed/hardstanding for pathways, seating, waste or compost bin enclosures or above-ground memorials have been included in the proposal. However, like the current cemetery, it is expected that there will be mown grass paths providing access to the burial plots and that other above-ground items may be provided over a period of time and more plots become occupied and visitors increase.

Diagram 2: The Layout of the Cemetery

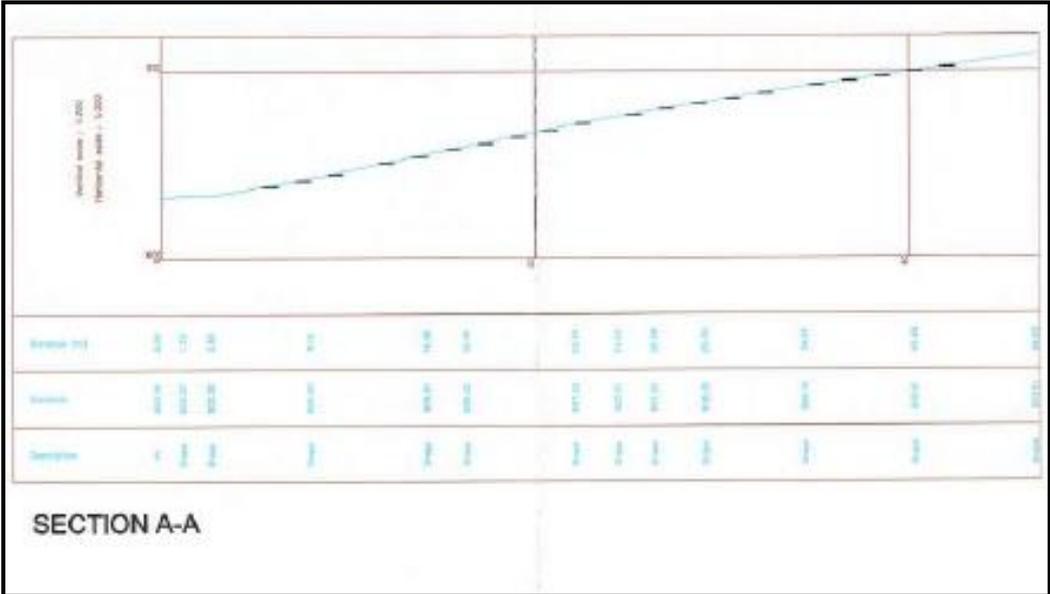


Apart from the Cathedral itself and the Bishopric itself, there is a vacant former radio station building to the south and St Paul’s School to the south/west of the application.

The land directly to the south would remain as vacant Crown land until such time as this cemetery is reaching capacity when SHG Property (Crown Estates) have indicated that it will also be gifted over to the Bishop of St Helena (this would be subject to a separate planning application submission at that time).

The proposal makes good use of natural features of the site and there is a minimum or no change to this natural landscape and in its visual impact on the wider landscape.

Diagram 3: Site Section for the Burial Plots



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There were no representations or objections received from any member of the public.

There were no objections received from stakeholders, however the following comments were noted:

HERITAGE SOCIETY: "The Heritage Society recommends that conditions are attached to the development permission requiring submission for approval of plans showing vehicular access and parking areas, details of all structures such as sheds and enclosures for dustbins, and landscaping/planting proposals, all to be approved and implemented before the use is commenced on the site".

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: "An environmental screening was done for this development. Issues relating to an increase in traffic, noise and dust during the construction of an access road and an increase in traffic during burials were noted but not considered to be significant. Uncertainty around flooding and drainage on the site was also noted as it was thought that the site was adjacent to a drainage bed.

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 area set out below:

- Intermediate Zone: IZ1, IZ4
- Social Infrastructure: SI1
- Built Heritage: BH1
- Roads and Transport: RT1
- Environmental Impact Assessment requirements

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

Principle of development

Loss of part of Comprehensive Development Area:

The development would result in a change of use to Community use, albeit not within a specific Use Class designation and therefore "sui generis" in a class of its own. As such the proposal does not accord with the designation of the site within a Comprehensive Development Area (Pouncy's) in the Intermediate Zone where housing, commercial and other development were expected to take place, nor the

associated Housing Policies H1, H4 & Table H.4 – which identified up to 60 new dwellings in the Pouncy’s CDA or other relevant CDA policies including IZ1 and IZ3).

However, Crown Estates has, subsequent to the CDA designation in the LDCP, 2012 undertaken ground testing and have considered that the land is unsuitable for residential development.

Crown Estates and the Governor’s Proclamation that this site is for a cemetery are as a result of this negative testing in the CDA and both represent material considerations to be taken into account in the consideration of this application for a cemetery. It should also be noted that the CDA includes the Bishop’s House and St Pauls School, with the latter recently been confirmed to provide Primary education for the foreseeable future, which means that there is only the land directly to the south of the application site, which is similarly impacted by the negative testing, that the CDA does not appear to be capable of providing the proposed development area going forward.

Proposed use:

Notwithstanding the above, in the Intermediate Zone, and in line with Policy IZ.4, there is a general presumption in favour of development including community development providing such development is in line with Primary Policy IZ1. Policy IZ1 does not however refer to community development but does refer to social and cultural development which it states “will be granted” subject to meeting a set of criteria which include that “b) the proposed use is not materially damaging to the amenity of existing development.”

The current St Paul’s Cemetery has now reached its capacity. While Dungeon New Cemetery with over 3,000 burial plots was only approved in 2019, people do like to have choices regarding where, in the absence of any Cremation facilities on St Helena, their loved ones will be buried. Communities appreciate the provision of such facilities near where the families live and where previous members of families are also buried.

Despite Dungeon New Cemetery being available for all denominations, and none, there remains a need for new burial sites on the Island.

The application site is adjacent to an existing cemetery and it relates well to the continuation of the use on the adjoining available land. It is considered that the proposal use would be acceptable in line with Intermediate Zone and Social Infrastructure policies.

Details of the proposal:

Impact on the surrounding area and on the Listed Building (St Paul’s Cathedral) and its setting:

The development does not include construction of any new buildings and therefore retaining the openness of the area with little to no visual impact on the landscape. The development proposed aims to preserve the openness of the site and will open up access to visitors. The proposed development will allow creation of new paths across the site and will be accessible to walkers/tourists.

The proposal relates well to the existing adjoin cemetery use and the access into the site is appropriate located to the topography of the site and easy accessibility.

Access/parking and traffic:

An access road off Pouncys is already provided to the existing cemetery which can be used in association with this new area such that no new roadways are needed. It is noted that there is an issue with parking on the main road at times, however, this is an existing situation which the new cemetery cannot be expected to resolve. In any event Islanders are sympathetic to the needs of those who need to use such facilities and make concessions when faced with parked vehicles on narrow roads surrounding the cemetery when burials are taking place. It should be noted that Dungeon New Cemetery some 10 times bigger than this proposal does not have a car park on site.

The Road Section have raised no concerns regarding additional traffic or parking on street.

Conclusion:

The proposed development of the cemetery in this location is supported by the relevant policies of the Land Development Control Plan, 2012 and the layout of the site and details utilises the landscape and natural appearance of the area to keep any visual impact of the use to minimal.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would meet the policies of the LDCP 2012 relating to the provision of social infrastructure in the Intermediate Zone and that taking into account that material considerations do have to be considered which point to the CDA not being able to fulfil its original intensions in this location, the proposal is therefore supported.