

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA SEPTEMBER 2026

APPLICATION	2026/37 – Installation of Metal Royal Mail Box
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	30 April 2026
APPLICANT	St. Helena Tourism
PARCEL	BA0031
LOCALITY	Blue Point
ZONE	Coastal
CONSERVATION AREA	Sandy Bay
CURRENT USE	Hiking Trail
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: ▪ <i>The Independent</i> Newspaper on 08 May 2026. ▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	22 May 2026
REPRESENTATIONS	One
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

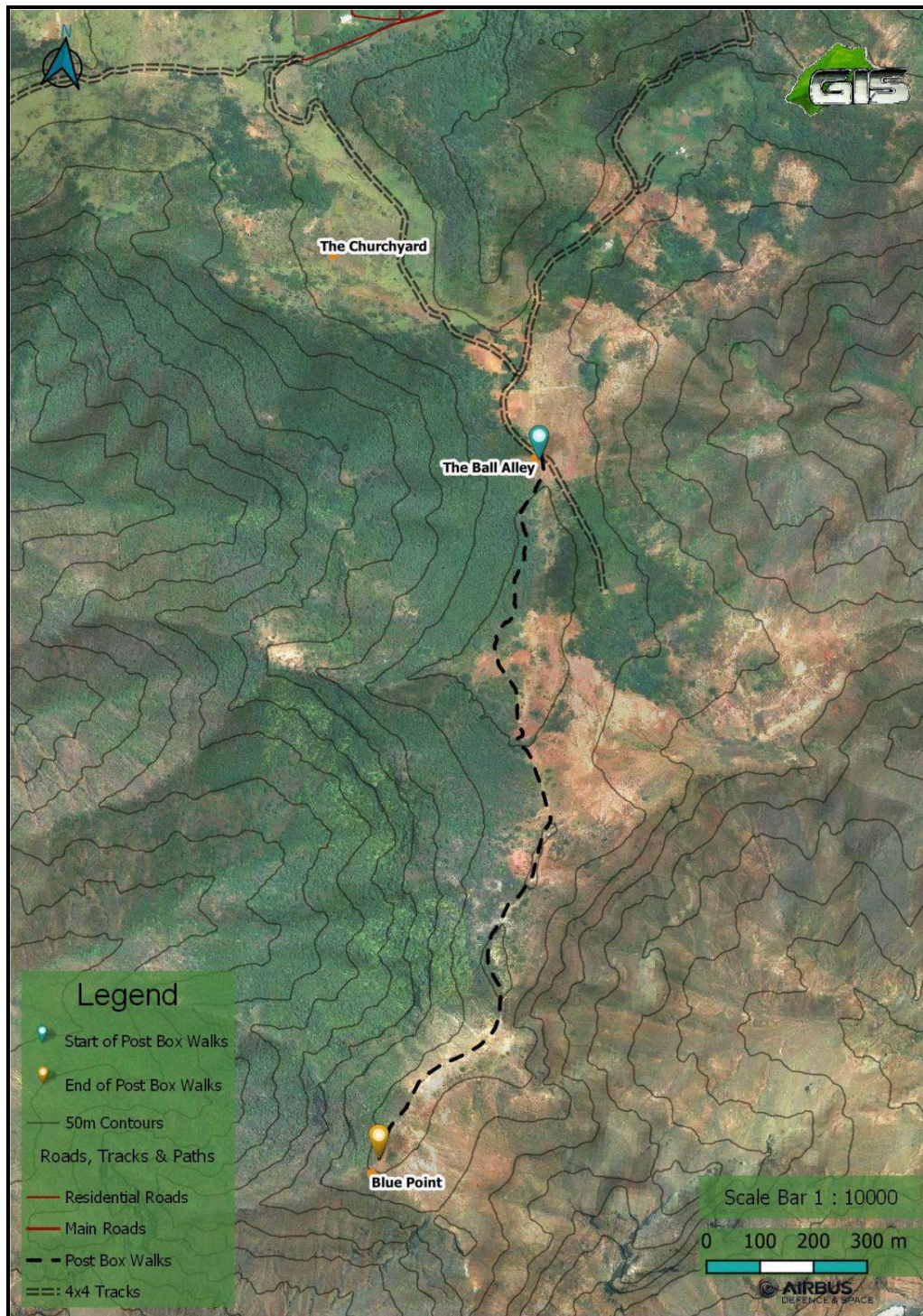
1. Sewage & Water Division	No Response
2. Energy Division	No Response
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Services	No Objection
6. Environmental Protection	No Objection – Comment
7. Environmental Health	No Objection
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9.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

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

The proposed development site is located at the end of Blue Point hiking trail, which is an established 'post box walk', designated within the Coastal Zone and Sandy Bay Conservation Area.

Diagram 1: Location Map



Location and Site Description

The location of the existing and proposed box is at the end of the Blue Point hiking trail. With the exception of the current “post box”, the site is an open and undeveloped area close to the top of a sea- cliff which enables walkers to have views of the sea surrounding St Helena. The Surrounding area comprises rock formations and plants on rocky soil and bare ground.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Applicant proposes to install a royal mail letter box on a black coloured metal pole as a replacement of the existing timber post box attached to a timber post at Blue Point hiking trail, as depicted in Diagram 2. The specifications of the proposed royal mail letter box are; 50-70cm (H), 25-35cm (W) and 20-30cm (D), as per Diagram 3, with the mailbox standing approximately 1-meter above ground level. The depth of the stand will depend on ground conditions on site and stability. Concrete will be used to install the mailbox if necessary.

Diagram 2: Existing & Proposed Hiking Trail Mail Box at Blue Point



Diagram 3: Visual of Proposed Mail Box In-situ with Specifications (AI Generated)



Supporting Information from Applicant

The Post Box Walks are highly regarded by residents and visitors alike. Walkers complete scenic routes across the Island's diverse landscapes and are rewarded at the end of each walk with a unique stamp and a logbook in which they can record their experience.

The proposed royal mail letter box was donated to St Helena Tourism, creating a unique opportunity to further strengthen the Island's historic and contemporary relationship with the British postal service while enhancing the visitor experience along the popular post box walk routes.

St Helena has had a long and meaningful connection with Royal Mail. As a British Overseas Territory, the Island has historically relied on maritime mail services to maintain communication with the United Kingdom and the wider world. Historically, postal services, have played a vital role in connecting the Island's community with family, commerce, and governance overseas. The installation of an official Royal Mail letter box symbolises this enduring relationship and celebrates St Helena's place within the wider British postal network. Royal Mail has expressed interest in promoting the letter box as potentially the most remote Royal Mail post box in the world. Given St Helena's geographic isolation in the South Atlantic Ocean, this feature presents a distinctive marketing opportunity for both Royal Mail and the Island. The installation would therefore carry not only practical value but also significant promotional and heritage appeal.

The addition of this iconic, metal, royal mailbox is expected to further encourage participation in the walks, increase visitor engagement and provide a photographic feature that walkers will wish to capture and share. The distinctive colour of the Royal Mail post box will make it an outstanding and recognisable landmark within the landscape. Its bold appearance will create a memorable focal point at the end of the walk, reinforcing the sense of achievement for participants while remaining sympathetic to the Island's heritage and character. Overall, the proposal seeks to celebrate St Helena's historic postal connections, enhance the visitor experience, and create a unique promotional feature that supports sustainable tourism and community engagement on the Island.

The applicants indicate that Blue Point was shortlisted from the 25 potential "post box walks" due to its accessibility and popularity with locals and visitors alike. Blue Point is one of the easier walks of all the post box walks, rated 2 out of 5 (approximately), giving it a broader appeal for families, casual walkers, and those with lower fitness levels. It is also one of the shorter routes, with an average walking time of approximately 45 minutes from the starting point to the proposed post box location, making it an inclusive option for a wider range of hikers and visitors.

In addition to its accessibility, the Blue Point hiking trail offers striking visual and significant environmental appeal. The walk showcases a stunning variety of landscapes, including distinctive rusty-coloured soils, areas of endemic habitat along the path, and culminates in exceptional coastal views. These features make it a popular and memorable experience for visitors.

The applicants conclude that the placement of the Royal Mail post box at this location has been carefully considered, to align with existing footpaths, helping to concentrate visitor activity along an established route rather than encouraging high footfall into sensitive areas such as Diana's Peak and High Peak. The GIS map in Diagram 1 displays the current position of the post box, which overlooks the ocean.

The Applicant proposes the installation of the royal mailbox at this location with the expectation of an enhanced visitor experience by providing a unique and engaging point of interest.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There was an objection received from one stakeholder; *Environmental Protection*, however, there were no further objections from any other stakeholder or members of the public.

Environmental Protection

This post box is located within a National Conservation Area (NCA), the Sandy Bay National Park. The primary purpose of the Sandy Bay National Park includes the protection of outstanding landscapes.

Whilst the post box walks are well known and established for aiding the appreciation and enjoyment of the NCAs and the replacement of the post box at the end of the walk is supported to enhance the walkers experience, the suggested Royal Mail Post Box is not in keeping with the natural surroundings. The current location is completely exposed and a bright red post box is visually intrusive.

It is therefore recommended that either the alternative post box is put here as this would be more in keeping with the natural surroundings OR the location of the Post Box is changed to somewhere less exposed, where it is placed against a backdrop that it can more easily blend into. It should also be considered that in its current location, the post box is completely exposed to the elements and having it in a more sheltered location would provide a more pleasant experience for the walkers using it.

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:

- Natural Heritage: Policies NH1, NH2
- Coastal Zone: Policies CZ1

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

In evaluating this development proposal, the primary considerations pertain to the proposal being located within the Sandy Bay National Conservation Area (NCA) and falls within the Coastal Zone and therefore, will be considered in line with the relevant policies as outlined above.

As the Blue Point hiking trail runs through the Sandy Bay NCA, policies NH1 and NH2 will apply. Policy NH1 b) states; *"Development which affects the natural heritage and does not encourage, maintain, enhance and conserve the natural heritage will not be permitted"*.

Policy NH2 states; *"In the National Conservation Areas there will be a presumption against development except development that will assist ...in the appreciation of the natural assets and ecosystems that they harbour..."* and Policy CZ1 states; *"There will be a presumption in favour of retaining the natural appearance and ecology of the Coastal Zone..."*

Unlike the current timber "post boxes", the proposed structure takes the form of a bright, red, metallic, ex Royal Mail post box, to be installed within the setting of the natural environment that consists of naturally multi-coloured earth landscape with a blue backdrop (from the Hiking Trail and Post box location) of sky and ocean. As such, this does not conform with Policy NH1, in that it will affect the natural heritage both visually and due to the urban materials proposed, neither enhancing nor conserving the natural heritage.

Royal Mail Boxes were designed to be highly visible from distance so they could be identified easily found in urban settings in the UK from Metropolitan Cities to Rural Villages; also the reason that Telephone Boxes are also red in the UK.

While the historic connection with the Postal Service in the UK is one that Saints are proud of; this was in relation to the provision of flax to make string for usually hessian postal bags and in relation to the RMS St Helena which carried post, rather than any other physical connection with the letter service in the UK. The UK letter service began in 1840 when the Penny Black (the first adhesive stamp) was issued starting the use of a postal service which was both country-wide and international but starting in streets in villages and towns by the posting of a letter in the newly installed red, letter boxes. At the end of a “post box walk” on St Helena, this connection is lost and the red, metallic, royal mail post box will not blend in within this open, undeveloped setting, as can be seen from Diagram 3 above. Rather it would, as designed, be highly visible from long distances away both in views along the hiking trail and. Albeit less so, in views from boats on the open sea, and an alien feature which is uncharacteristic in this location.

There is also an objection from the Chief Environmental Officer that the proposed development does not align with Conservation Area Management Plans which are currently being drawn up *“...the suggested Royal Mail Post Box is not in keeping with the natural surroundings. The current location is completely exposed and a bright red post box is visually intrusive...”*.

Additionally, another significant material consideration is that the coastal air is salty, and some coastal areas are known to be very acidic as well, which will contribute to the deterioration of the metal mailbox within a short period of time.

To conclude; the development proposal would be visually intrusive due to its materials/bright colour and is not compliant with Natural Heritage policies NH1, NH2 and Coastal Zone policy CZ1 as explained above.