

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA SEPTEMBER 2026

APPLICATION	2026/56 – Installation of Metal Royal Mail Box
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	30 April 2026
APPLICANT	St. Helena Tourism
PARCEL	JT170093
LOCALITY	Sampson's Battery
ZONE	Coastal
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown Historic
CURRENT USE	Historic Artefact
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	None
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

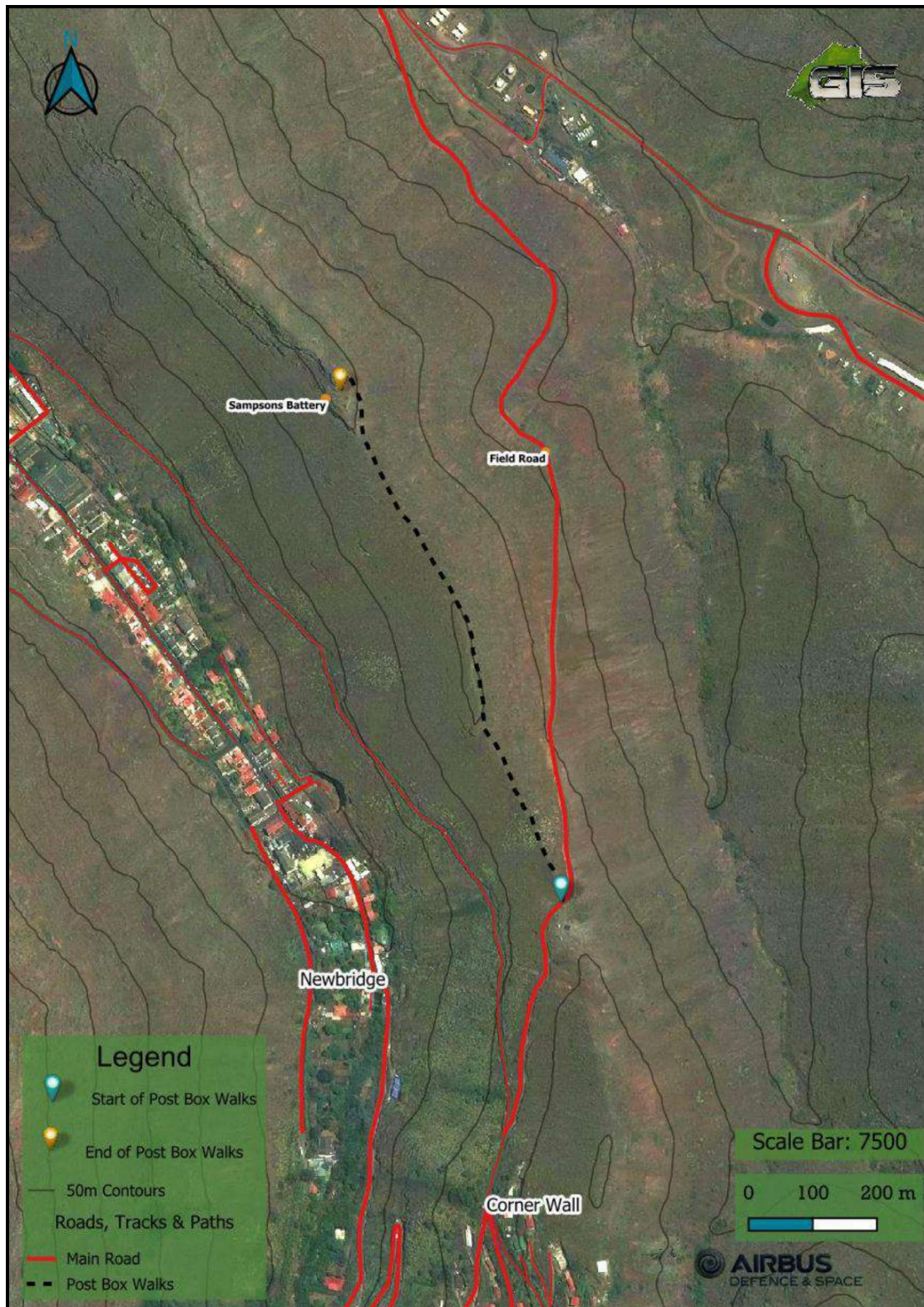
1. Sewage & Water Division	No Response
2. Energy Division	No Response
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Services	No Objection
6. Environmental Protection	No Objection – Comment
7. Environmental Health	No Objection
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. 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 Sampson's Battery, which is designated within the Coastal Zone and Jamestown Historic conservation area.

Diagram 1: Location Map



Site Description

The end of the post box walk at Sampson's Battery is a fortification with numerous cannons around a wide circular platform which overlooks both Jamestown and Ruperts valleys. The location of the current unattached plastic UPVC pipe supported by rocks around its base which acts as a "Post Box" was, in March 2026, close to the rear of the platform on the Jamestown Side. However, the GIS map as per Diagram 1 below, shows where the (moveable) current post box is located directly adjacent to one cannon.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Applicant proposes to install a royal mail letter box as a replacement of the existing post box at the end of the hiking trail at Sampson's Battery, as depicted in Diagram 3 below. The specifications of the proposed royal mail letter box are; 50-70cm (H), 25-35cm (W) and 20-30cm (D) 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.

The Applicant has a preferred new location for the replacement mailbox, which will be approximately a meter or so behind the cannon.

Diagram 2: Existing & Proposed Hiking Trail Mail Box at Sampson's Battery



The applicant submits that 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.

The applicants indicate that St Helena has had a long and meaningful connection with Royal Mail. As a British Overseas Territory, the Island has previously 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 applicants proposed that 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 applicants indicate, 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.

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



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There were no representations or objections received from stakeholders or any members of the public. However, there was a comment made by *Environmental Protection*, as detailed below.

Environmental Protection

Unlike the proposed Blue Point location, the proposed Royal Mail box is fine for this site. Location 1 is the least visually intrusive but location 2 is still okay as it has the backdrop of the hillside.

[Officer comment: Location 1 is not provided as only one proposal can be considered and loc. 2 is the “preferred” location]

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:

- Built Heritage: Policies BH1, BH2 and BH5
- Coastal Zone: Policies CZ1

In evaluating this development proposal, the primary considerations pertain to the proposal being located within the Jamestown Historic 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 Sampson’s Battery falls under the Jamestown Historic NCA, policies BH1 and BH2 will apply. Policy BH1 a) states; “Development which encourages, supports and includes conservation of historic structures and their setting, including ...fortifications and related artifacts...” and BH1 b) that states; “Development which affects historic structures and their setting and does not encourage, support and include its conservation... will not be permitted” and BH1 c) states; “Development in Historic Conservation Areas will be permitted only if it enhances and protects the character of the Area...”. As the proposed structure takes the form of a bold, red, metallic, royal post box, to be installed within the setting of both the historic fortification and the natural environment that consists of a stunning, rocky coastal landscape with a blue backdrop of sky and ocean, this does not conform with policy BH1, in that it will not conserve, enhance or protect the character of the fortification and its setting.

BH2 states; “The... design, materials... siting and use of any development shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of the historic asset and its setting” and BH6 states; “Historic monuments and other identified nationally important archaeological resources shall be preserved in situ, and within an appropriate setting. Developments which have an adverse effect on historic monuments or the integrity of their setting will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances and appropriate mitigation measures put in place...”

Policy CZ1 states; “There will be a presumption in favour of retaining the natural appearance and ecology of the Coastal Zone...”

Unlike the alternative timber “post boxes”, the proposed structure takes the form of a bright-red, metallic, ex Royal Mail letter box, to be installed within the setting of the natural and historic environment that consists of natural flora and natural stone used for the Battery. As such, this does not conform with Policy BH1, in that it will affect the built 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 less developed historic 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 would be an alien feature which is uncharacteristic in this location.

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 Built Heritage policies BH1, BH2 and BH5 and Coastal Zone policy CZ1 as explained above.