

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA SEPTEMBER 2026

APPLICATION	2026/75 – Installation of Photovoltaic Panels at The Mule Yard (Retrospective)
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	18 May 2026
APPLICANT	Stephen McDaniel
PARCEL	JT020006
LOCALITY	The Mule Yard, Jamestown
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Heritage Coast
CURRENT USE	Social Venue
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: ▪ <i>The Independent</i> Newspaper on 20 May 2026. ▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	04 June 2026
REPRESENTATIONS	One
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Sewage & Water Division	No Response
2. Energy Division	No Objection – Comment
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Services	No Response
6. Environmental Protection	No Objection
7. Environmental Health	No Response
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 Objection
15. Maritime	Not Applicable

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

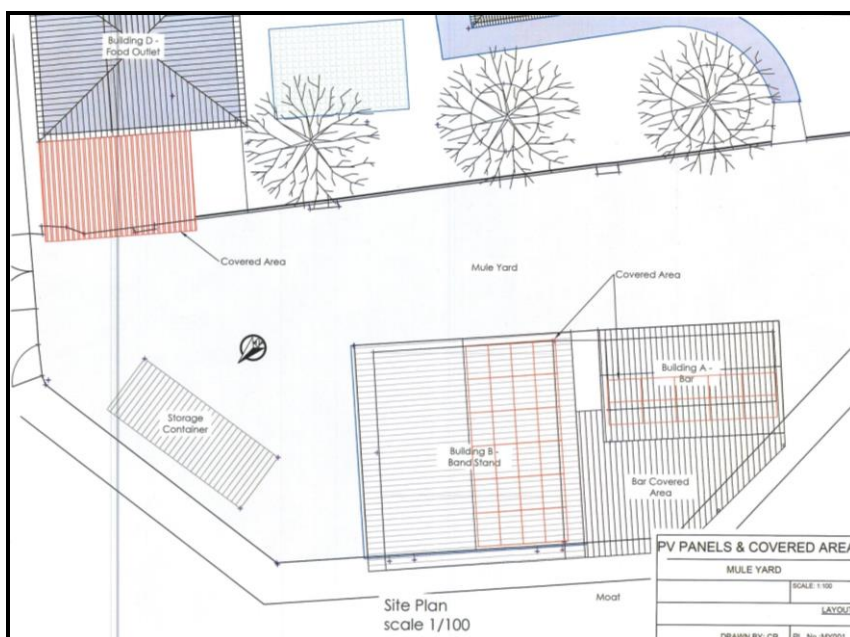
LOCALITY & ZONING

The proposed development site is located at The Mule Yard, Jamestown, which is a Grade I, Outstanding Group Value (O.G.V.) listed fortification situated within a mixed-use area and designated within the Intermediate Zone and Heritage Coast Conservation Area.

Diagram 1: Location Map



Diagram 2: Site Plan



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This is a retrospective application for the installation of photovoltaic panels on to the front-facing (North) elevation of the roof of the bar kiosk at The Mule Yard (10 panels) and also on to the west-facing elevation of the roof of the band stand (18 panels), as depicted on the Site Plan in Diagram 2 above. The photovoltaic panels have been installed flat on to the roof in alignment with the roof elevation.

Diagram 3: Elevation Plans

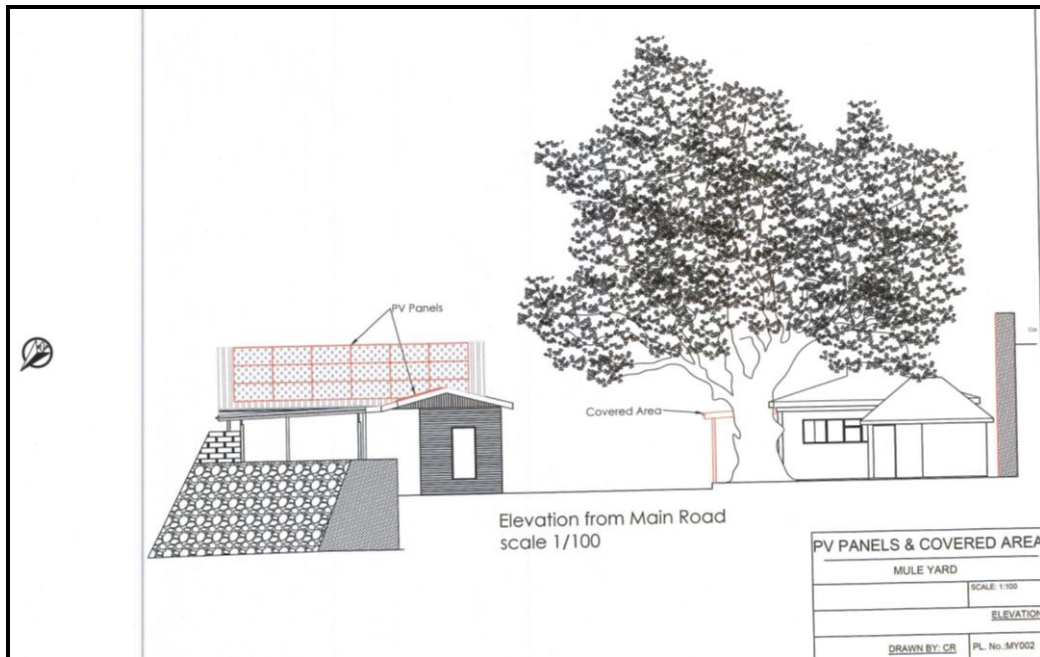


Diagram 4: Photographs Showing Photovoltaic Panels on the Roof of the Bar & Band Stand

Photograph 1 – Front Elevation Showing Photovoltaic Panels of Bar Roof



Photograph 2 – West Elevation Showing Photovoltaic Panels on Band Stand Roof and Side View of Photovoltaic Panels on Bar Roof



Photograph 3 – Northwest Elevation Showing Photovoltaic Panels on the Roof of the Band Stand and Bar



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There was one representation received from a member of the public and a comment was received from *Connect St. Helena (Energy Division)*, as detailed below.

Connect St. Helena (Energy Division)

Solar panels to be connected off-grid.

[Officer Response: The Applicant's Agent confirmed that the photovoltaic panels are a completely off-grid system.]

Representation from a Member of the Public

The previous application '2025/61 Retention of Covered Area (Retrospective)' was discussed at a meeting of the Governor in Council on 17 March 2026. It is recorded that 'The Chief Minister expressed disappointment about having to consider an application retrospectively within the historic conservation area...' Even while the meeting was taking place the Chief Planning Officer noted publicly (though not recorded in the minutes) that unauthorised work was again in progress at that very moment on the building then under consideration.

The unauthorised work included installation of solar panels and a new infill section of roof. The dual applications 2026/75 and 76 have not included that new section of roof nor the purlins laid out on the east facing slope seemingly in preparation for further solar panels. The unauthorised section of roof is on the Terrace Wall side connecting the bar shed with the stage roof.

... It is important to note that as part of the historic fortifications the level ground of the Mule Yard is in itself a Grade I Listed Structure and deliberation into the application must take that into account.

It should also be noted that most of the structures in the Mule Yard have resulted from overstayed temporary permissions of the last twenty years. There is a need for a Conservation Management Plan for the whole area. A couple of years ago (2022/23?) there was an unexecuted planning condition to tidy up the Mule Yard to free it from the appearance of an unplanned collection of buildings it has become.

Central to the present and future of these historic fortifications is the Crown Estate which is also the Governor in Council, and it should be expected that as owners of this important site they should be encouraging their leaseholders to follow the planning rules intended for its upkeep.

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
- Energy: Policy E1 a) and E5

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

As with any retrospective development it has to be considered as if the works have not already been undertaken. I.e., would permission have been forthcoming for what is proposed or would it have been refused or would amendments have been sought? In essence however, amendments cannot be considered for retrospective development, only whether permission should or should not be granted. If permission is refused, enforcement action needs to be considered to remove any unauthorised development.

That this is a retrospective application does mean that the impact can be assessed post implementation.

Principle of Development:

In evaluating this development proposal, the main considerations pertain to the Built Heritage (considered below) and Energy policies in relation to the unauthorised installation of the photovoltaic panels on to the roof of the bar and band stand at the Mule Yard, which is part of a Grade I Listed Fortification which is also of Outstanding Group Value (O.G.V.) with other historic assets in the vicinity/locality.

Energy Policy E1 indicates that there is no presumption in favour of granting development permission for photo-voltaic panels in National Conservation Areas, however, Energy policy E5 that states; *"...In the case of buildings of architectural or historic interest and in National Conservation Areas, the design and siting of the panels are to be such that they do not adversely affect the character of the building or of the conservation area..."*.

It is therefore considered that (subject to no adverse impact on the character of the Listed Building/structure or the Conservation Area) the unauthorised development would be acceptable in principle be in line with Energy Policy E5.

Impact on the Listed Building/Structure:

Built Heritage policy BH1 a) that states; *"Development which encourages, supports and includes conservation of historic structures and their setting, including listed buildings, monuments and fortifications and related artifacts, will be permitted..."*.

As the photovoltaic panels are not affixed to the fabric of the fortification or the surrounding moat or the perimeter walls of the Mule Yard, that it would not result in a direct material harm to the Listed historic structure.

The photovoltaic panels are a clearly modern addition within the Conservation Area and affect the historic setting of the Listed Structure, however, considering;

a) the placement of the panels on to the roof of the bar kiosk and band stand is such that it does not have a detrimental effect on the setting visually, as it lies flat, in alignment with the roof elevation (see photos in Diagram 4),

b) it is a feature that can be easily removed at any time without any material harm to the Grade I (O.G.V.) listed fortification, and

c) the Mule Yard has accommodated modern features and artifacts within the fortification walls throughout its lifetime, as it has consistently been utilized for communal uses such as its namesake, 'Mule Yard', which was for the temporary keeping or 'parking' of mules/ donkeys, before motor vehicles became the main mode of transport on the Island, and in more recent decades it has consistently been used as a social venue, as it is now.

Therefore, the area within the fortification terrace/walls has evolved over time, but with limited detriment to the fabric of the fortification terrace/walls.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Historic Coast Conservation Area:

BH5 states; *"Development ...within a Historic Conservation Area or affecting its setting shall preserve or enhance its character... The design, materials, scale and siting of any development shall be appropriate to the character of the Historic Conservation Area and its setting..."*.

This development is a utility fixture attached to an existing non-historic development which has been sited within the Mule Yard for some years now.

Prior to the current (retrospective) proposal, there are no photovoltaic panels attached to any of the buildings/structures in the Historic Coast Conservation Area and this is the first time a Development Application has been submitted for them in this Conservation Area. A positive decision here could set a precedent for any or all buildings in the Conservation Area to seek to have photovoltaic panels.

There has been no attempt to hide the photovoltaics from public viewpoints (for example on the rear roof slopes or that facing away from the bridge) and it has to be noted that Grade I Listing is the highest listing possible, therefore the most important historic buildings/structures on St Helena Island. It is therefore considered that little has been done to ensure that the siting of the panels do not impact on the Conservation Area.

It is considered that the photovoltaic panels would, due to them being attached to a non-historic but approved development, not be out of the character with the existing bar (container) and relatively light-weight wooden bandstand within the Conservation Area; such as the roof to which they are affixed, or the structures to which it serves.

The design and scale of this modern addition is a simple, dark coloured, rectangular panel that fits flat on to the roof of the bar and bandstand. The design of the panels are of a neutral colour and simple rectangular shape that are sited in alignment with the existing roof elevations. The panels do however blend better with the colour of the bar roof, which is dark slate grey, rather than the bandstand roof which is a bright green.

The photovoltaic panels are not affixed to the Grade I (Outstanding Group Value – O.G.V.) historic fortification itself but rather sited on to the roof of the bar kiosk and band stand, that are existing structures that are established within this historic setting, it will not affect the character of the fortification materially and it can be considered that these added modern additions are not unusual for non-historic

buildings/structures to provide off-grid “free” energy to support the use of the venue and the renewable energy choices.

It is recognised that photovoltaic panels can be removed very easily at any time it they may not harm the setting of the listed building(s) or the special character and appearance of the Historic Coast Conservation Area in the long-term, however, the building/structures to which the PV panels have been attached are permanently-placed structures and, it can reasonably be assumed that the pv panels would be in place over an extended period, unless permission is only given for a temporary period.

It is considered that the proposal would neither preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, however, the photo-voltaic panels are attached to a non-historic building/roof structure which itself does not have a particularly positive impact. However, it is considered that the panels, as they are flat on the existing roofs, would not result in any significant worsening of the current impact of the building/structure and are therefore they are considered to be neutral in terms of impact on the Conservation Area’s special character and appearance.

Conclusion:

It is considered that the introduction of modern forms of energy production would align with energy policies for renewables in the LDCP, however, consideration is given to the harm such very modern and very visible additions have on historic areas where “modern” has generally bypassed them.

Considering all of the points as detailed above and to conclude, the photovoltaic panels are considered to provide renewable energy in line with Energy Policies and would not result in significant harm to the historic context, such that they are acceptable.