

## Planning Officer's Report - LDCA December 2021

<b>APPLICATION</b>	2021/94 – Proposed two bedroom dwelling
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Full Permission
<b>REGISTERED</b>	4 November 2021
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Melanie Richards
<b>PARCEL</b>	BG0337
<b>SIZE</b>	0.25 acres
<b>LOCALITY</b>	Barren Ground
<b>LAND OWNER</b>	Melanie Richards
<b>ZONE</b>	Intermediate Zone
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	None
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Excavated Vacant Site
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sentinel Newspaper on 4 November 2021</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	18 November 2021
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	None Received
<b>DECISION ROUTE</b>	<del>Delegated</del> / LDCA / EXCO
<b>PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS</b>	2019/95 Original application for a two bedroom dwelling on this same site

### A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

a) Water Division	No Objection
b) Sewage Division	No Objection
c) Energy Division	No Objection
d) St Helena Fire & Rescue	No Response
e) St Helena Roads Section	No Response
f) Heritage	No Response
g) Environmental Management	No Response

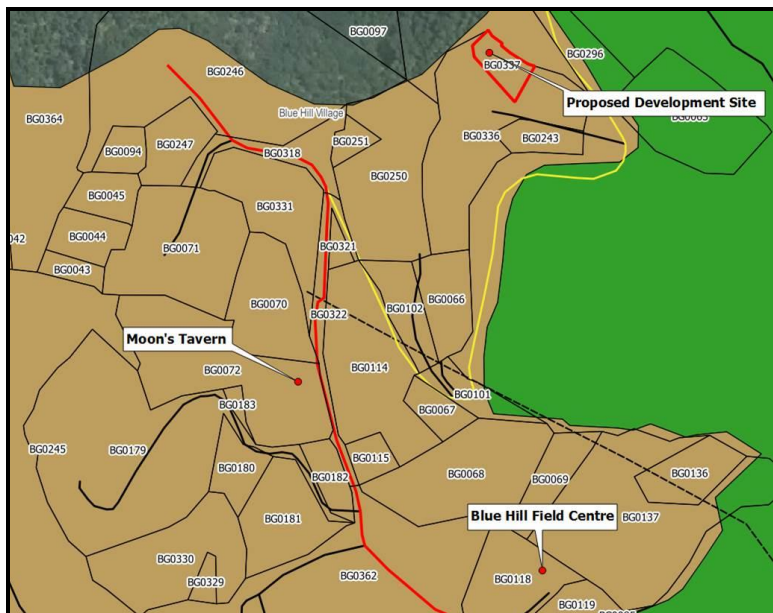
h) Public Health	No Response
i) Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
j) Property Division (Crown Est)	No Response
k) St Helena Police Service	Not Consulted
l) Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted
m) Sustainable Development	No Response
n) National Trust	No Response

## B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

### LOCALITY & ZONING

The proposed development site is located within the Intermediate Zone where relevant IZ1 policies apply such as serviceability and impact on neighbouring amenity. There are no Conservation Area restrictions.

**Diagram 1: Location Plan**



### BACKGROUND AND PLANNING HISTORY

In October 2019, the owner submitted a development Application for the proposed construction of a two bedroom single storey bungalow type house on this site (plot no. BG0337) reference 2019/95. The development was considered by the Authority at its meeting in January 2020 where development permission was granted subject to a number of conditions.

It was the planning officer's view at the time that a design to suit the steep hillside land would have been the optimum choice. Therefore, in the pre-application meeting with the agent, design improvements were brought to his attention with a view to reconsidering the design and layout. However, the applicant and agent were resolute that a bungalow design house was their preferred development choice.

*Report Author: P Scipio*

*Authorised by: I Mohammed (CPO)*

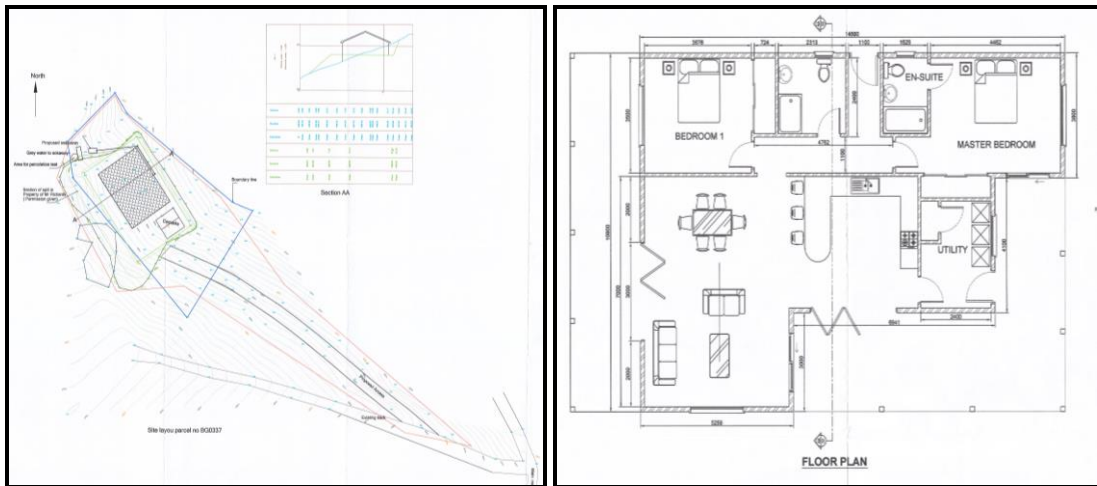
*Report Date: 1 December 2021*

*Application 2021/94*

It was also brought to the agents attention during the pre-application discussions that the orientation of the proposed house on the site plan didn't aligned with the contours and topography of the site and thus created an extremely high embankment on one side of the site. A redesigned site layout plan was submitted to comply with the recommendation.

All of the above was included in the original report and the recommendation was for approval due to the fact that the design showed an excavated embankment height that complied with the policy and that the front of the house would be built up.

**Diagram 2 & 3: Site & Building Plan Submitted with the Original Application**



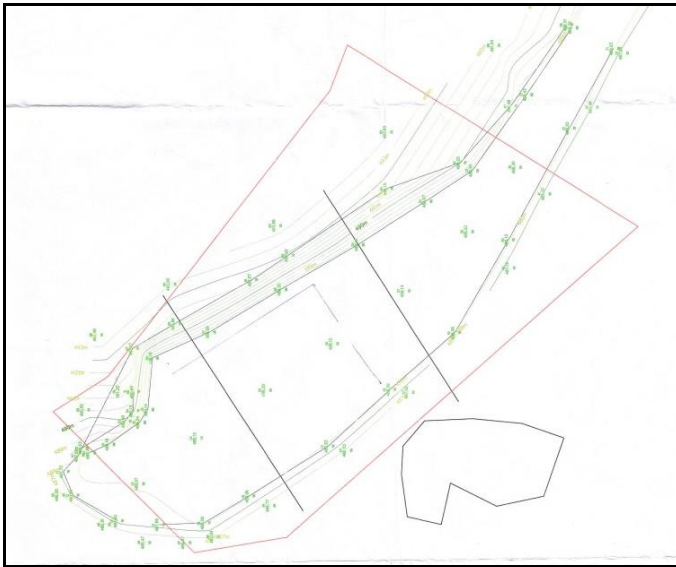
Upon receiving approval the applicant has subsequently excavated the site of the building and access road. On site inspection, it was found that the excavated embankment was higher than what was submitted and approved (from 3.2 to 5.8 metres at the highest point). A site visit was arranged with the agent and a request made for an as-is site plan to be provided. On the site visit it was also found that the excavation on the north side and excavation plus land spoil on the west side was outside of the applicant's boundary and within Crown land. The revised as-is site plan submitted to planning did not show this, however, an additional revised site plan submitted to Crown Estates did, therefore it was ascertained that the revised site plan submitted to planning was incorrect.

**Diagram 4: Images of the Excavated Site**





**Diagram 5: Site Plan Showing Existing Excavation**



Due to the embankment height difference and the redesign of the house to fit the existing excavated land, the applicant has submitted a new application.

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

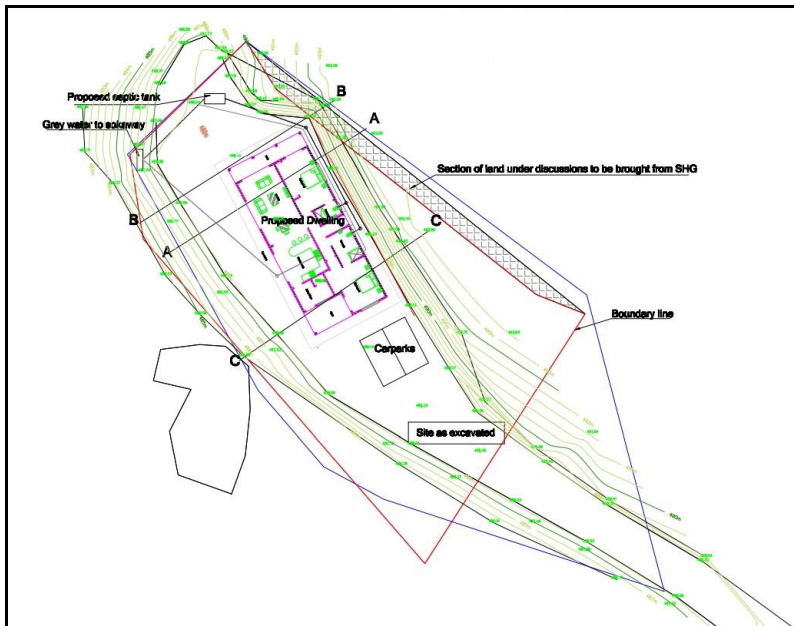
**Site:** The site is owned by the applicant and is approximately 0.25 acre (1056m<sup>2</sup>). The site sits on a steep hill side (approx. 23°) which is not always practical for a bungalow design house due to the one level floor design requiring a large excavated flat area and subsequent high embankment and/or a significant amount of built up section at the front of the house.

In this case the excavation has been carried to an excessive depth in order to accommodate the bungalow design on a solid platform, thus creating an embankment at the rear of the house of approximately 5.8 metres at the highest point which doesn't comply the general limit of 3 metres as stated in the LDCP policy IZ 1. F) *"The design and layout do not generally entail excavation nor making up of levels to a depth or height in excess of 3m."*

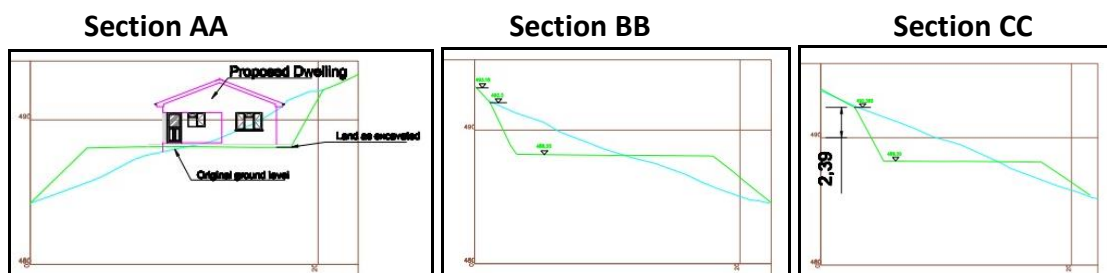


Due to the fact that the excavation was carried out outside of the boundary limits, the applicant has applied for additional land from Crown Estates which will be approved subject to planning approval.

**Diagram 6: Site Plan (Proposed)**



**Diagram 7: Site Sections (Proposed)**

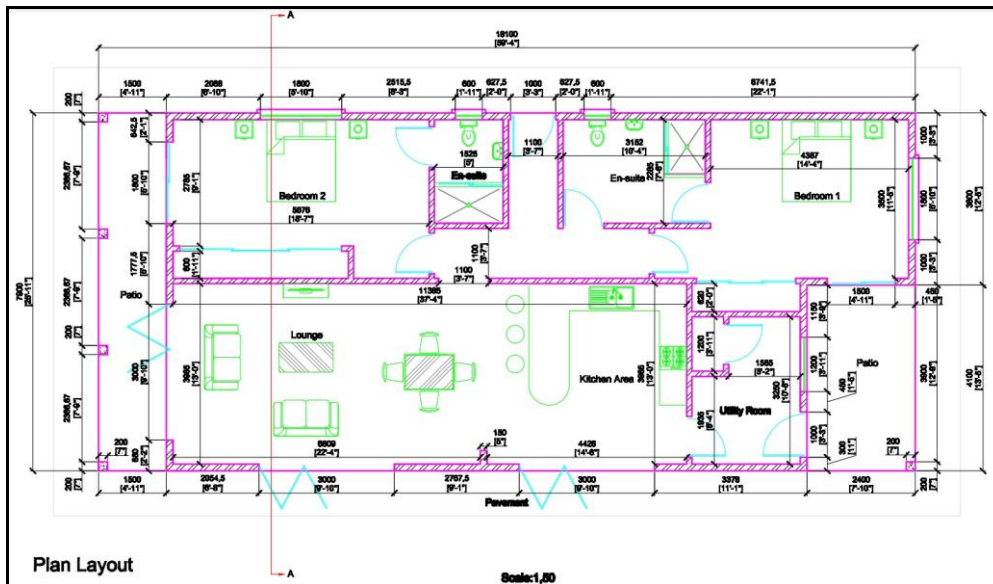


**Building:** This is a two bedroom with two bath bungalow and an open plan kitchen, dining and lounge with a small covered patio area on the gable end. The proposed house is now 3 metres narrower than the original and allows for a better fit to the site.

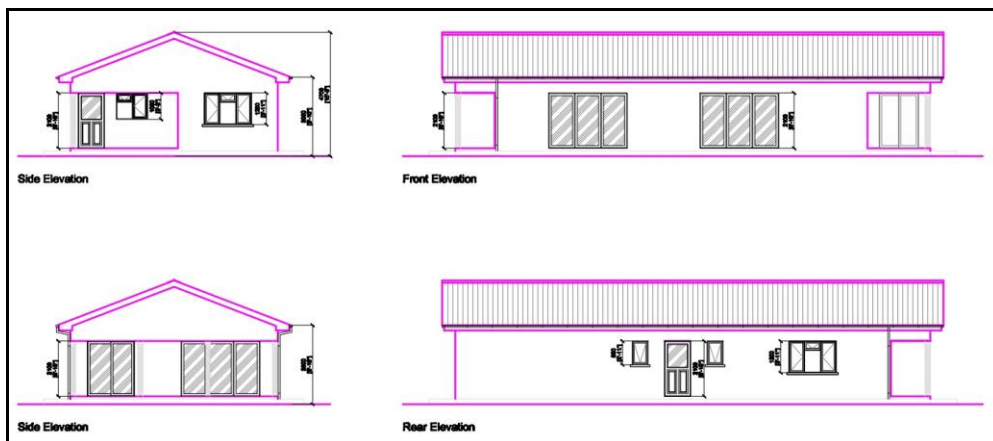
Due to a section of the proposed building still having to be constructed through the make-up soil spill, an engineered designed foundation with supporting walls will still need to be submitted with the building regulation application.

A septic tank and soakaway is proposed within the boundary of the proposed development. A successful percolation test was carried out and the final design of the septic tank and soakaway will be submitted and approved with the building regulation application.

**Diagram 8: Plan (Proposed)**



**Diagram 9: Elevations**



## REPRESENTATIONS

No representations were received from any statutory body or members of the public, including immediate neighbours.

## LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The relevant policies of the Land Development Control Plan (LDCP 2012 - 2022) that are applicable in the assessment of the proposed development are set out below:

- Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1 (a, b, f, g and h)
- Water: Policy W2
- Sewage, storm and Drainage: Policies SD1 (b, c), SD3, SD.4 and SD7
- Road and Transport Policies: RT1 (c and d), RT3 and RT7

## **OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT**

This new development application has been necessary due to the lack of understanding of site topography on the original application and limited design skills to suit hillside development and negligence in managing the excavation that has taken place on the site without any due regard to the visual impact on the landscape.

Majority of developments on the island, are on steep hillside land which creates issues with high embankments when excavated to accommodate bungalow designed houses that are over 7 to 8 metres in width on a solid level platform.

A design that makes best use of the natural hillside slope can create beautiful surroundings, improve the view and provide the development with character that fits into the landscape.

The building design in this application is 3 metres narrower than the building submitted with the original application to fit the now excavated site with only a small section at the front to be built through the makeup soil.

As a solution to the visual scarring of the existing high embankment it is the planning officer's view that a section of the land (2.3 metres high) be reinstated and compacted onto the existing platform thus reducing the embankment height to 3.5 metres. The house foundations and under floor walls can be constructed to correspond with the new compacted infill height. This will be conditioned should be permission be granted.

Overall the design is a simple, single storey bungalow with a dual pitched roof that creates an appearance similar to those of neighbouring properties in terms of siting, scale, proportion, details and external materials thus complying with the housing policy H.9 and IZ1(a) and therefore can be supported.