

Planning Officer's Report - LDCA JUNE 2022

APPLICATION	2022/23 – Proposed Installation of Photovoltaic Solar Panels
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	21 April 2022
APPLICANT	Alan & Deborah Benjamin
PARCEL	JT130028
LOCALITY	Benjis Store, Upper Jamestown
LAND OWNER	Alan & Deborah Benjamin
ZONE	Intermediate Zone
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown
CURRENT USE	Shop
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sentinel Newspaper on 21 April 2022▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	5 May 2022
REPRESENTATIONS	One Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Sewage & Water Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Objection (See Comments under Representations)
3. Fire & Rescue	No Response
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Division	No Response
6. Environmental Management	No Objection
7. Public Health	No Response
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. St Helena Police Services	Not Consulted
10. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted
11. Sustainable Development	No Objection

12. National Trust	No Objection
13. Sure SA Ltd	No Objection
14. Heritage Society	No Response

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

The proposed development site is located in upper Jamestown within the Jamestown Conservation Area.

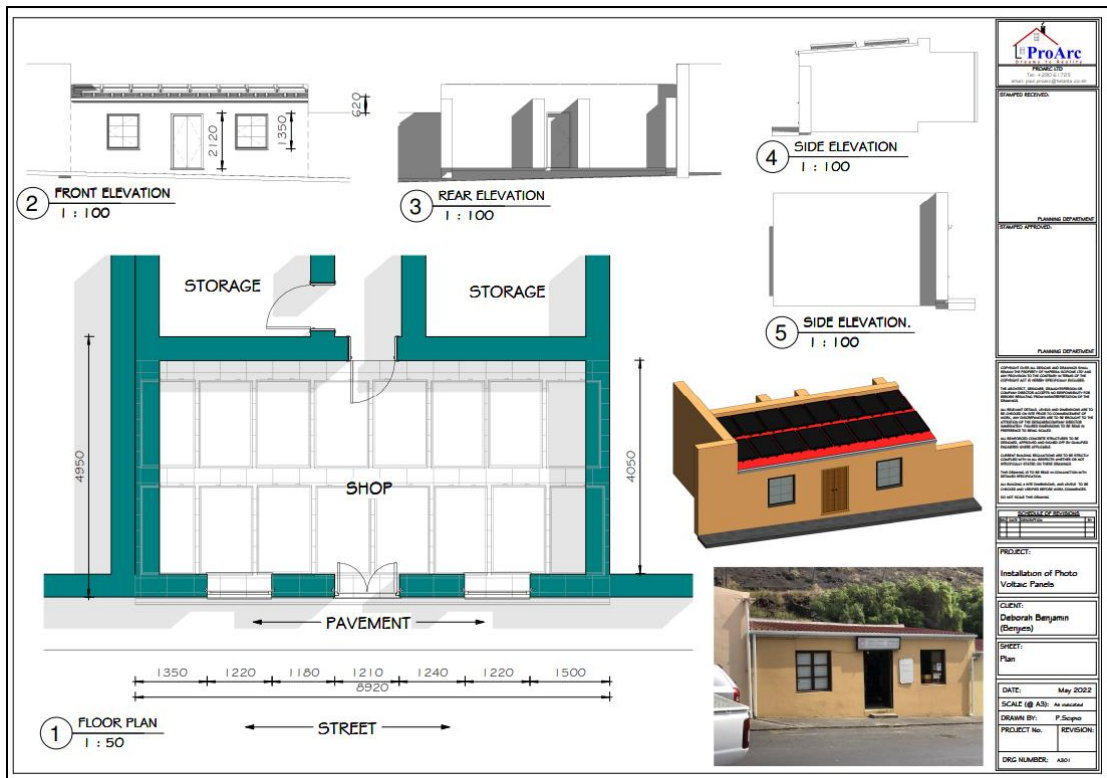
Diagram 1: Image of the Shop Front



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The request is to install 16 photovoltaic panels measuring 197 x 100cm, where the mounting system will be aluminium rails in total height of the installation no more than 8-10cm. The panels will be installed on the east elevation of the main shop.

Diagram 2: Plan, Elevations & 3D



REPRESENTATIONS

No representations were received from any statutory body, However Connect St Helena made the following comments:

CONNECT ST HELENA: *“Connect makes no observation as to the development request which is a decision for planning but assumes that the system will be off grid and that the developer is aware that any electrical apparatus connecting to the mains supply conform to BS 7671 IET 18th Edition, Requirements for Electrical Installations’ and that the system to be installed will have systems to prevent connection to the grid or the interference with the supply to other consumers. Connect can offer assistance and advice to the developer if requested as to any potential technical or safety issues.”*

The following representation was received from a member of the public:

“This application will “adversely affect the character of the conservation area” as in policy E5 as this will be visible from the street.

As the panel’s alignment is 45 degrees to north these panels are likely to be just as efficient on the existing rear roof or even in the rear yard. There is no need for them to be on a roof.

Allowing panels on the street facing roof will set a precedent that could endanger the character of the entire conservation area. Therefore this application should not be permitted.”

POLICY CONSIDERATION

The proposed development is assessed against the LDCP Policies set out below:

- Energy Policy: E5
- Built Heritage Policy: BH1 c)

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

Policy E5 reads 'Development permission will be granted for the installation on existing buildings of solar hot water and solar electrical generation panels and related equipment. 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 conservation area...'

There is an increasing demand for PV panels within Jamestown particularly on commercial buildings, where merchants are trying to lower their utility costs by taking the 'green' initiative. Examples of these are on the Barracks Warehouse, Thorpe's Wholesale and Old Cinema Building to name a few. The impact of this over a period of time will drastically change the roofscape of Town, particularly when viewed from areas like Side Path and Jacobs Ladder. It is therefore imperative that a management plan or policy is drafted to assist with what we want to achieve within the conservation in town relating to PV installations.

In assessing this application, the panels will inevitably be seen from the street elevation, albeit not as conspicuous as the Barracks Warehouse, therefore it is not envisaged that the panels will adversely affect the character of the building or conservation area. The rear of the building was investigated as an option, however the applicant advised the existing roof structure was not suitable to support the panels.