

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA MARCH 2025

APPLICATION	2025/06 – Replacement of lights on Jacobs Ladder, comprising construction of 92 new concrete bases to facilitate the vertical installation of new bollard lights
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	28 January 2025
APPLICANT	Street Light Section, St Helena Government
PARCEL	JT170076
LOCALITY	Jacobs Ladder
ZONE	Intermediate/Coastal
CONSERVATION AREA	Heritage Coast
CURRENT USE	Historic Landmark
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Sentinel Newspaper on 30 January 2025▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	13 February 2025
REPRESENTATIONS	Three Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

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

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

This historic landmark feature being Jacobs Ladder is a Grade I Listed Monument, connects Lower Jamestown and Ladder Hill by means of 699 steps. It is designated within part Intermediate and Coastal Zone as well as the Heritage Coast Conservation Area.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Street Lights Section of Saint Helena Government (SHG), The Applicant, is proposing to replace the existing light fittings on Jacob's Ladder (*aka. The Ladder*) with new, 'dark skies compliant' light fittings.

The reason for this proposal is for a number of reasons, including:

- **Maintenance Costs** – the existing light fittings are now 25 years old and are failing and incurring increasing costs to maintain in a safe condition.
- **Running Costs** – the existing light fittings have outdated lamps fitted within them that are relatively costly to run. Lighting technology has since evolved from the initial introduction of LEDs, which means the annual energy costs with new light fittings can be reduced substantially.

- **Safety** – There is also the need to consider the safety effectiveness of all aspects of Jacob’s Ladder, including the lighting that involves electrical safety standards with which to comply.
- **Aesthetic of Iconic Historical Landmark** – as well as the safety, cost effectiveness and environmental aspects of upgrading the lighting of Jacob’s Ladder, there is also the aesthetic element to consider. Jacob’s Ladder is an iconic and well-revered historical landmark of Jamestown that has a unique attraction, which means that maintaining and enhancing its appearance is of critical importance.

Prior to deciding on the proposal, the applicants considered designs, including solar-powered light fittings, which would obviate cabling. However, for longevity and adequate lighting performance, separate solar panels and batteries would be required, which is not practicable in the location and would still require some cabling. Therefore, mains powered lights were decided as the best option. Consideration was also given to the option of continuous LED string lights as opposed to individual lights as per existing. However, with the lack of practicality of affixing string lights to the cast iron of The Ladder and the higher risk of vandalism with this design, it was agreed by the collective interested parties, that the preference is to maintain the existing night-time aesthetic with individual lights.

In collaboration with the *Jacob’s Ladder Working Group*, *The Heritage Society* and *Tourism Office*, The Applicant is proposing a new light fitting design that is ‘Dark Skies Compliant’, internally lit bollard light that is relatively small with a height of 48cm and will be positioned 500mm away from the steps on either side.

Currently, there are 70 lights, 35 positioned on each side of The Ladder. The existing light spacing and light readings that were taken, indicate the spread of light from the existing arrangement is inadequate, where some steps are receiving no light at all. It is therefore proposed to increase the number of light fittings to 46 positioned on each side of The Ladder. This will mean an improved spacing arrangement and light distribution.

The new spacing per side will be 6.1m, which matches the spacing of the wooden rollers that carried the haulage chain of the inclined plane. Those rollers can be seen in early photographs of the Ladder as seen from Main Street and the Grand Parade, this synchronised arrangement makes for a subtle, sentimental nod to the historic relevance of The Ladder, utilizing this modern feature.

The small bollard lights will be grey in colour, which will provide minimal impact on the aesthetic of Jacob’s Ladder in daylight. Each bollard will be bolted down through a small cast concrete plinth 200 x 200mm and angled to compensate for the slope, so that the bollards are vertical. Included in the installation will be:

- Construction of 92 new concrete bases (200mm x 200mm) with 46 on each side to facilitate the vertical installation of new lights. (See schematic drawings below)
- Replacement of the existing electricity supply cables and junction boxes.
- Removal of existing old lights and cables.

Diagram 2: Site Plan Showing Existing Position of Lights

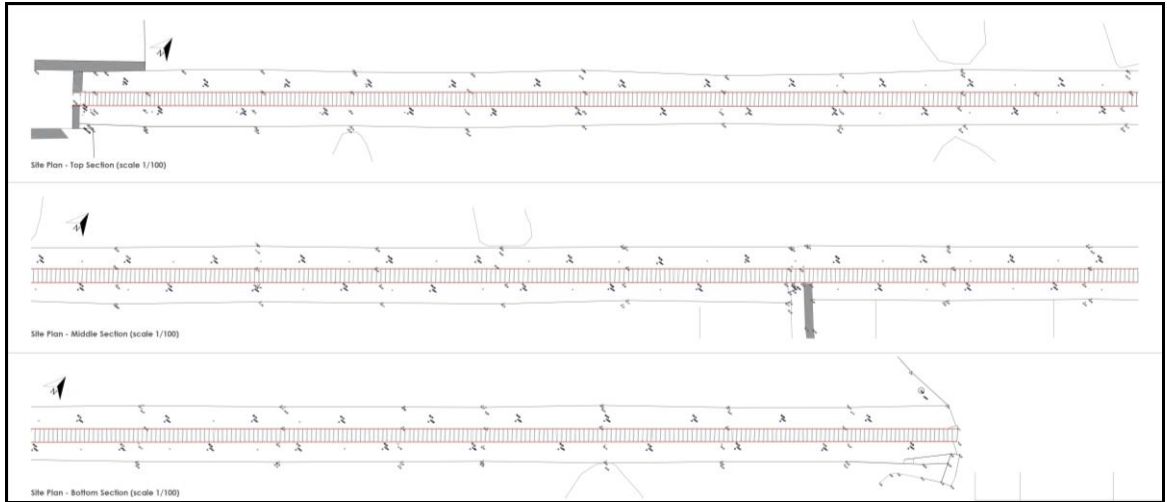


Diagram 3: Site Plan Showing Proposed Position of Lights

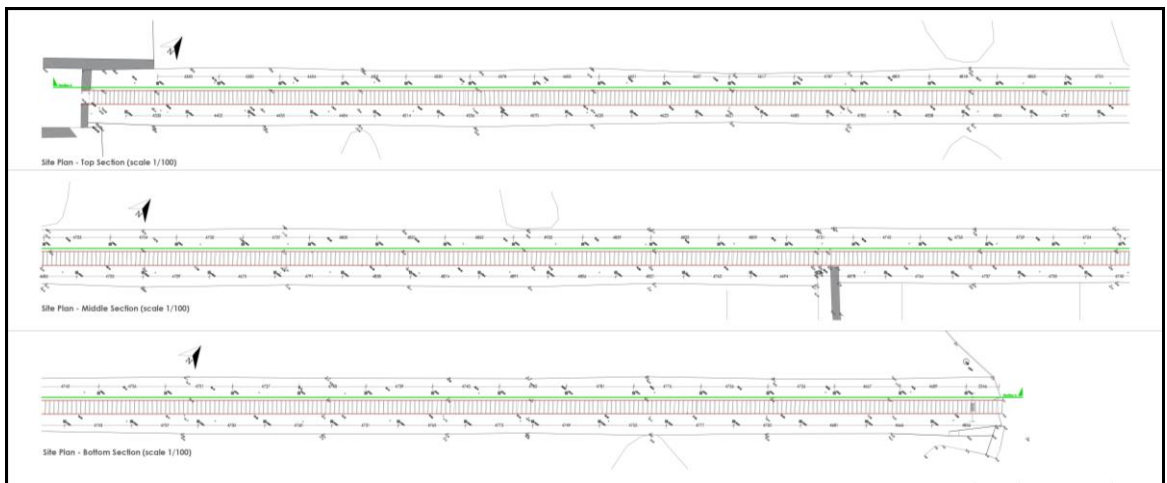


Diagram 4: Section A Showing Proposed Position of Lights

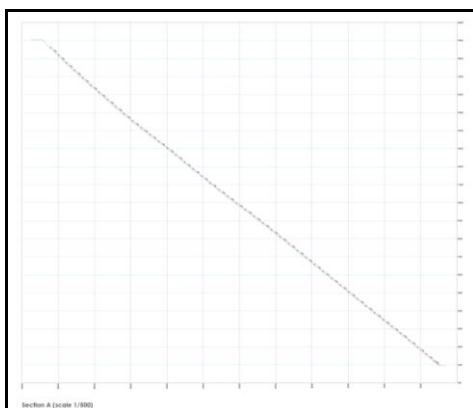



Diagram 5: Technical Data Sheet of New Proposed Lights

LH-SQUARE BOLLARD

10W Mains LED Bollard
Replaceable GX53 LED
Ideal for footpaths, Parks
Car Parks, Business Parks &
New Build Houses



Product Features
Available in Black / White & Grey
High quality product
Utilising Shockproof UV-Stabilised Resin
Long lasting lifespan for sustainability
Salt water resistant
DSC with unobtrusive design
Including bollard cap to reduce uplighting
No maintenance required
Insulation class II
IP55
TUV—CB certified
Kelvin Settable: 3000K / 4000K / 6500K
Lumens: 1190 / 1290 / 1210
10Watt LED replaceable GX53



Diagram 6: Sample Mock-Up of Light



**Credit to David Taylor for construction of the sample mock-up light*

Diagram 7: Installation Schematic Drawing 1 – Artist’s Impression

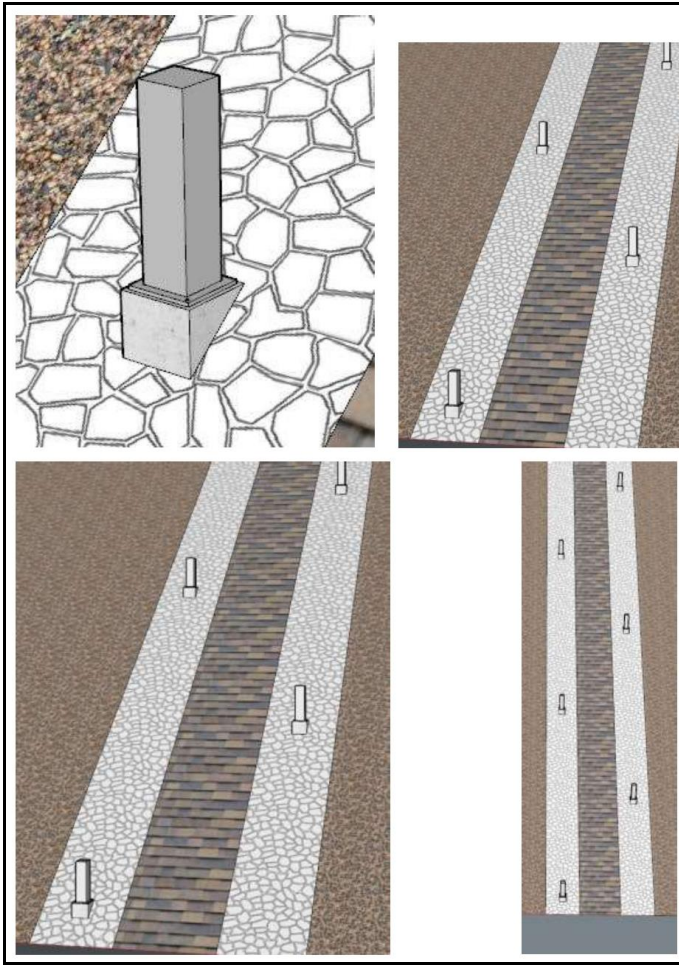


Diagram 8: Installation Schematic Drawing 2 – Artist’s Impression

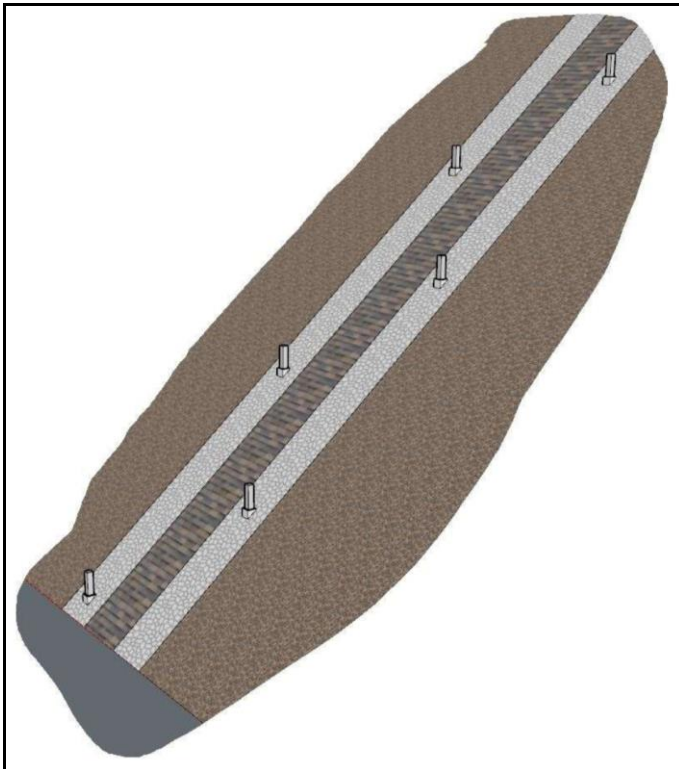


Diagram 9: Installation Schematic Drawing 3 – Artist’s Impression

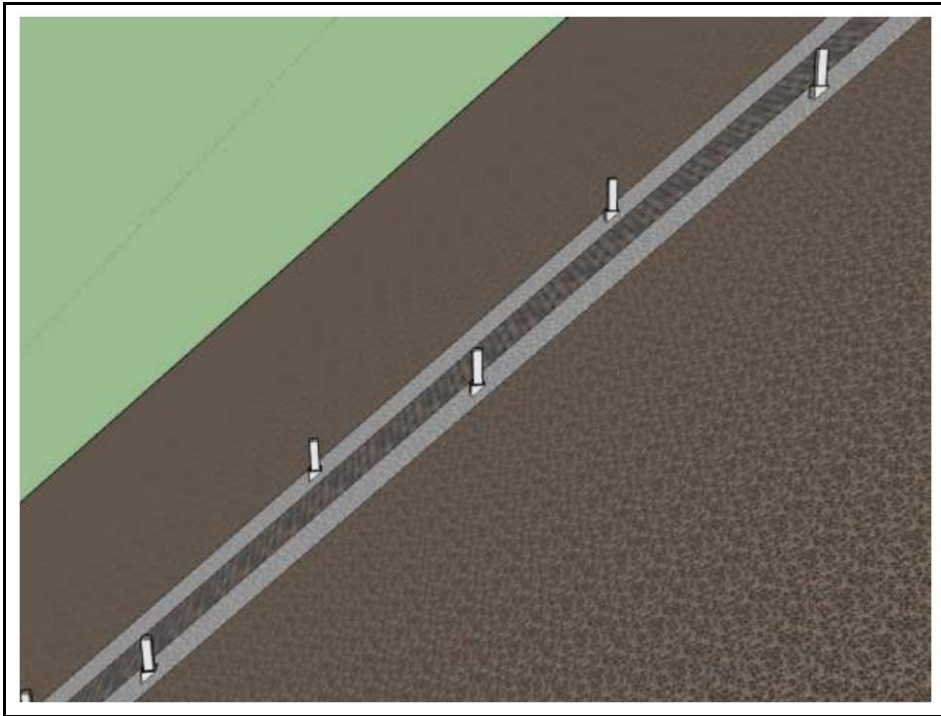
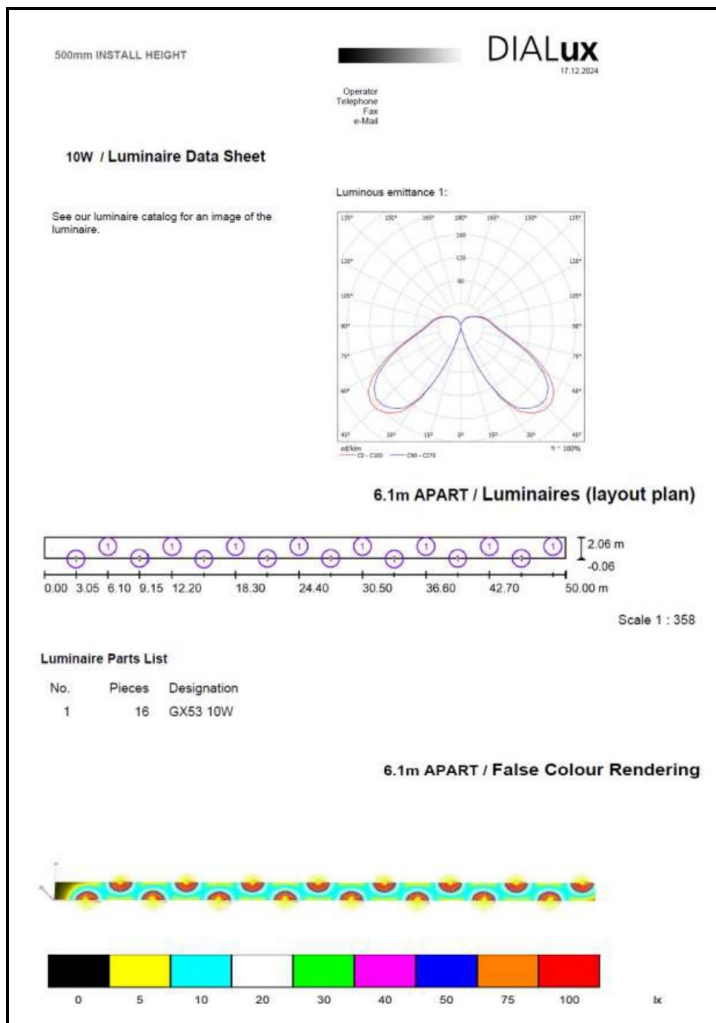


Diagram 10: Snippet of Technical Design Showing Light Distribution of Proposed Lights



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

A number of representations were received from members of the public, as detailed below. There were no further objections received from stakeholders however, there were comments made by various stakeholders, also detailed below.

Representation 1

I write in respect of the planning application “Application 2025/06: FULL Planning Application for Replacement of Lights on Jacobs Ladder comprising construction of 92 new concrete bases to facilitate the vertical installation of new bollard lights, on Parcel JT170076. Applicant: St Helena Government – Streetlight Section”.

The lighting of Jacob’s Ladder has a significant impact on the island’s “dark sky” status. Observing the sky in the direction of the ladder is already near-impossible. It seems to me likely that “bollard” style lights will increase the amount of light pollution significantly unless these lights are designed to throw their illumination almost exclusively downwards. If they are not, then I object to this application.

I recognise that lighting of the ladder is a safety issue but would like it to be done sensitively.

Representation 2

I used to live on the island and was involved in the astronomy group and the application for dark sky status (I’m an ex-professional astronomer). I wholeheartedly agree that, in line with the policies Dark Sky International (the body that accredits dark sky reserves), any replacement lighting for Jacob’s Ladder needs to be sensitively chosen to preserve the stunning quality of St Helena’s dark skies.

Representation 3

It is surprising this application to make changes to a Grade I Listed Monument in a Historic Conservation Area was submitted by a government department without any meaningful discussion with the planning office.

The policy for Monuments is at BH 6. ‘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.’

The proposed concrete blocks to support the proposed lighting bollards are shown without detail. It is unlikely they will sit on top of the Inclined Plane as depicted. They

will need to be dug-in somehow but there is no detail. How does this relate to 'preserved in situ'?

It would also seem the blocks shown will be too small as the anchor bolts will be so close to the edge that the corners will break off. Therefore they will need to be several inches wider. If they are wider, they will also be higher due to the angle. As a result the blocks depicted will be larger than shown in the application and will therefore have a greater adverse impact on the appearance of the Ladder.

There has been no indication of any alternative lighting schemes which should be of paramount importance for such an important structure. This should include perhaps options for no lighting at all with the Ladder returned to its previous appearance. Another for a lighting scheme from outside the structure of the Inclined Plane, and then perhaps another with thinner lighting poles attached to the Ladder, for example.

Seemingly unnecessary constraints on the lighting designs have been imposed such as anti-vandal bollards and references to Dark Skies compliance. However vandalism is unlikely to occur on such a dangerous structure; and there is no requirement for Dark Skies compliance as there is no such legislation here.

It is also of concern that there is very limited drawing information provided. For example there is no section provided across the staircase. If there was, it would show the longitudinal beam against the steps is likely to create a shadow across half of each step meaning the lighting will far less efficient than shown. This may lead to the bollards being increased in height, again adversely affecting appearance.

It therefore appears that the proposals as submitted may need to be increased in size in terms of bollard height and concrete blocks, indicating this application may not be fit for purpose.

The application requires more information.

Heritage Society

The Heritage Society has been consulted on this from the outset by the Roads Engineer and fully supports the proposal.

Royal St. Helena Police

The Royal St Helena Police support this proposal, as effective lighting of Jacob's Ladder is essential for it to be safe for public use during the hours of darkness.

Connect St. Helena – Electricity

Contact us for any power disconnection or service shifting.

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 Policy IZ1
- Coastal Zone Policy CZ1
- Energy: Policy E8
- Built Heritage: BH1 a), b), c), BH2, BH3, BH5
- Tourism: T1
- Roads and Transport: RTd)

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

The main considerations are the impact of the proposal on the historic asset and on the character and appearance of the Jamestown Historic Conservation Area; and whether the provision of replacement lighting would provide a safe pedestrian and tourist route from Jamestown to Ladder Hill Fort/Half Tree Hollow.

In evaluating this development proposal to replace the light fittings on Jacob's Ladder, the Applicant engaged in extensive prior consultation and collaboration with relevant parties, including; light fitting designers, *Jacob's Ladder Working Group*, *The Heritage Society* and Tourism Office in an effort to ascertain a mutually agreed, best design of light fitting to replace the existing light fittings on Jacob's Ladder. Mains powered lights were decided as the best option. To this end, careful consideration was given to the final design of light fitting that would be most appropriate and offer a relatively long service life in harsh environmental conditions. The final chosen design is a 'Dark Skies Compliant', internally lit bollard, with a height of 48cm that will be positioned 500mm away from the steps and each placed on a 20 x 20cm concrete base to facilitate the vertical installation of the bollard on a sloping surface.

In addressing the representations of concerned members of the public, as this light fitting design is confirmed as 'Dark Skies Compliant' within its manufacturer's specification, albeit Dark Skies Legislation has yet to be enacted, this meets with Saint Helena Government's (SHG) aspiration in the event legislation becomes enacted. Concern was also raised with regards to the concrete bases and the excavation entailed, a condition has been added to ensure details are submitted to show how the bases will be constructed to ensure the works are carried out sensitively to the inclined plane.

In considering all aspects of the design of the proposed light bollard that will replace the existing lights on Jacobs Ladder, while the 92 bollards would replace the 70 existing lights, they are of a relatively small stature and finished in a grey that complements the inclined plane's 276m, and will not appear visually intrusive within the landscape. It is not considered that this design will dominate nor affect the integrity of the listed monument.

The proposed replacement lighting will provide greater light coverage of the steps which are used by pedestrians and tourists than currently. This would improve public safety in line with Policy RT1 d) and T1.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with the Built Heritage, Energy, Road and Traffic, Tourism, Intermediate and Coastal Zone policies