

## Planning Officer's Report - LDCA November 2019

<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>2019/79</b> – Proposed loft extension & alterations to existing stone house and formation of a new access road.
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Permission in Full
<b>REGISTERED</b>	12 September 2019
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Andrew Craig Lawrence
<b>PARCEL</b>	NG0038 & NG0039
<b>SIZE</b>	0.58, 0.39 acres
<b>LOCALITY</b>	New Ground
<b>LAND OWNER</b>	Andrew Craig Lawrence
<b>ZONE</b>	Intermediate Zone
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	None
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Existing Residential house
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Independent Newspaper on 13 September 2019</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	27 September 2019
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	Representation received from the Heritage Society
<b>DECISION ROUTE</b>	<del>Delegated</del> / <b>LDCA</b> / <del>EXCO</del>
<b>PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS</b>	None
<b>SITE VISIT</b>	21 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

### 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 Objection

f) Heritage	Response - Comments
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) Enterprise St Helena (ESH)	No Objection
n) National Trust	No Response

## B. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS SUMMARY

The proposal is for an extension to an existing stone building to form a loft providing an additional three bedrooms and two bathrooms. It is also proposed to extend and alter the ground floor veranda to align with the front of the building. The loft extension is to be formed by sitting a concrete block structure onto the existing stone walls, with three dormers on the front creating individual decks for each of the three bedrooms and a small dormer in the bathroom at the rear.

The veranda alteration and extension on the ground floor is proposed to be constructed from reinforced concrete columns and a reinforced concrete beam, partly enclosed with an 1100mm high block wall.

The proposed access road spurs of the existing residential road and is directed through the applicants own property, in front of an old ruin on plot NG0039 and then through plot NG0038.

## C. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

**Location:** 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. The development is in the New Ground registration section, plot number 0038 & 0039.

### Diagrams 1 & 2: Location Plan



**Site:** The proposed building development sits on site plot no. NG0038 only, whereas the proposed access road sits on both plots: NG0038 & NG0039. Both sites are owned by the applicant and are approximately 0.97 of an acre, (3820m<sup>2</sup>) combined.

The development site is largely overgrown with trees and shrubs both within the boundary and outside of the boundary to the west on Crown land. Crown Estates has confirmed that their land to the west is too steep for future building development, thus allowing this development to likely remain as the last building to the west and subsequently will not be viewed from any properties in front.

The site is serviced with electricity, water and an individual sewerage system.

### **Diagram 3: Site Plan**



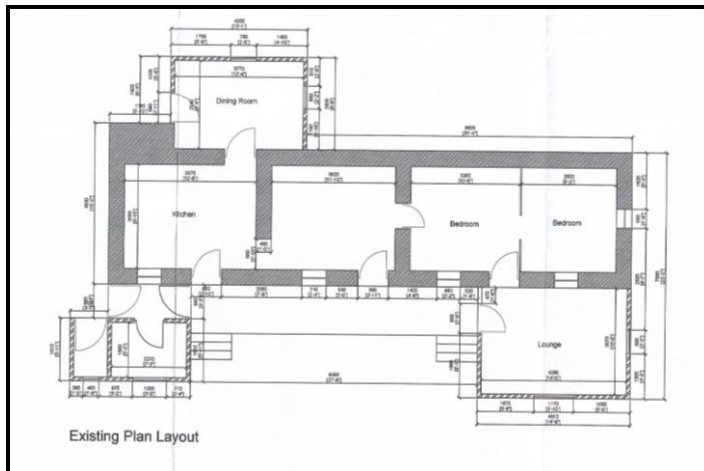
**Existing:** The existing building is not listed and is not within a conservation area and consist of two stages of development. The original was a four room stone and mud structure with a mono pitched roof sloped from back to front of the building.

The secondary concrete blockwork extension carried out in later years to the structure was a dining room on the rear and a lounge, toilet and bathroom on the front of the building. The existing veranda is a timber structure with the old style crisscross railings.

There exist a septic tank and soakaway on the property that are in working order and of adequate size to accommodate the proposal.

While the existing building is functional as a single story standalone structure, there is no visible evidence that the existing structure can accommodate the additional loads and stress of the loft extension. This is an issue that has been discussed with building control and subsequent to planning approval the applicant will be required to submit evidence and calculations with the building regulation application proving the soundness and capabilities of the existing structure to the accommodate the additional loads and stress of the extension.

**Diagram 4: Plan (existing)**



**Diagram 5: Images (existing)**



**Proposed:** The proposed loft and veranda extension will inevitably change the appearance and character of the existing building.

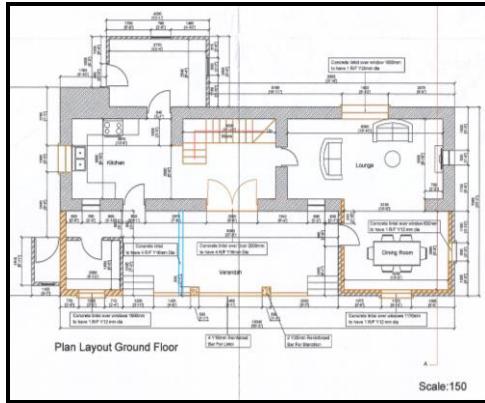
Ground floor Veranda: it is proposed to construct reinforced concrete columns with a reinforced concrete beam over the top creating three patio-like openings. The three openings will be enclosed with a concrete block wall (1100mm high) with allowance for access to the main house on either side via steps.

It is also proposed to add new concrete block walls and reinforced concrete beams on the ground floor to provide additional strength and support for the loft extension. Sections of the existing stone walls to be removed to create new doorways and open plan layouts.

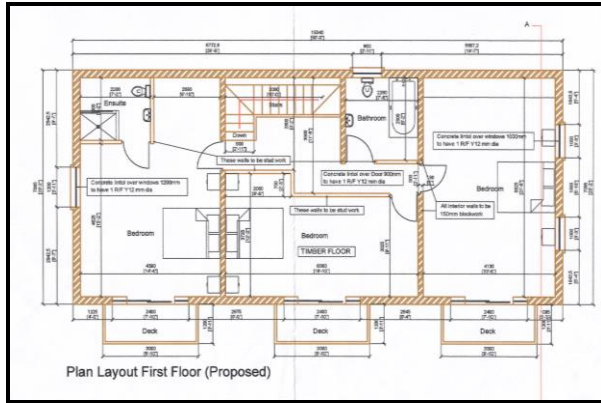
The new stairs will be constructed within the existing stone building.

Loft: it is proposed to construct a concrete block structure (external walls: 225mm wide & internal walls: 150mm wide) on top of the existing building to form two gables on the sides and 1300mm high walls on the front and rear. The loft will consist of three bedrooms and two bathrooms with individual dormers/decks on the front of each bedroom.

**Diagram 6: GF Plan (proposed)**



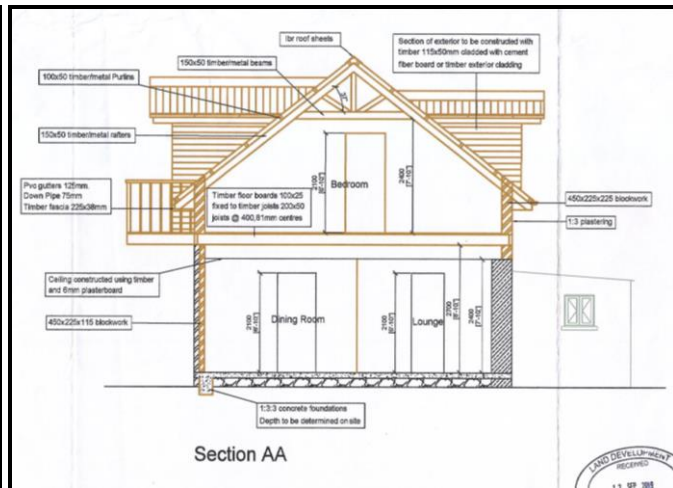
**Diagram 7: Loft Plan (proposed)**



**Diagram 8: Elevations**



**Diagram 9: Section Thro'**



**REPRESENTATIONS**

A representation was received from the Heritage Society objecting to the proposed development and raising a concern that the old house will probably be demolished when construction begins or be lost in the project whether it is retained or not.

The Society asked that the application is not progressed until a survey is undertaken to ascertain whether the existing building has any historical significance worthy of protection or preservation because of its unique character as an old type house and the dwindling number getting fewer by the year.

It was also suggested that a different design be looked at that retains the character of the existing house while providing the same level of accommodation as proposed.

## **OFFICERS COMMENTS**

As stated, the building is not protected by any listing and neither is the building within a designated conservation area. All old building or buildings in areas of some historic importance have some significance in the historical development and heritage of the area, however it is not possible to preserve and/or conserve them all. This building is no doubt of some interest in the layout and with some design and details and features, particularly the railing details in the veranda which appear to be less common on the Island. The building is in a slight poor state and the repair and refurbishment to modernise is required and the addition of an extension with the new loft development to provide additional space and a more comfortable residency.

There are many examples of residential and other buildings that provide an understanding of the development on Saint Helena over the centuries and many of the more notable buildings are protected through their listing. Whilst this building with its layout, design and detail is of interest, it is not considered appropriate to consider it for "Urgent Building Preservation Order" because it is subject of a development application that will change the character and appearance of the building with the development proposed. There has to be real justification for doing so and to refuse development permission and consider it for listing (Building Preservation Order) and there needs to be evidence to support such a decision. To consider it for "Urgent Building Preservation Order" and to stop any development works that would not require development permission is not appropriate in this instance.

## **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 IZ1 (a, b, f, g and h)
- Water - W2
- Sewage, Storm and Drainage - SD1 (b, c), SD3 and SD4

## **OFFICER'S ACCESSION**

There are concerns regarding structural soundness and stability of the existing building to accommodate the loads and stresses of the loft extension. It might be more practical to demolish the existing stone building and construct a complete new build. However, these issues will be addressed by building control on submission of this application for Building Regulation approval.

With regard to the appearance, there is a mix-match of window design and dimensions that could be made more uniformed. The size of the dormers over each individual deck seem to overpower the appearance of the front elevation. These

observations could be an issue or viewed as character depending on personal opinion.

There are also concerns with the internal layout of the loft bathrooms. Insufficient headroom above the toilet and sink in the ensuite and above the bath in the other bathroom could be an issue and will be addressed when application is submitted for Building Regulation approval.