

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA MARCH 2020

APPLICATION	2020/05 – Proposed Change of Use from Residential Care Home to Ten Units of One Bedroom Social Housing Flats
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Permission in Full
REGISTERED	16 th January 2020
APPLICANT	Property Division, St Helena Government
PARCEL	LWN0344
SIZE	0.45 acres (1891m ²)
LAND OWNER	Crown Estates
LOCALITY	Barn View, Longwood
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Longwood House (Partially)
CURRENT USE	Former Care Home
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Independent Newspaper on 17th January 2020▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	31 st January 2020
REPRESENTATIONS	Four Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Sewage & Water Division | No Objection |
| 2. Energy Division | No Objection - Note: Changing the use of the building to 10 single flats (10 new consumers) would mean that the existing supply cable would need to be upgraded to cope with the changes in demand. The developer will bear the cost for upgrading the existing cable and its associated works. Application for |

	electricity is required for each flat
3. Fire & Rescue	No Response
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Division	The Applicant
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	No Objection
11. Enterprise St Helena (ESH)	No Objection
12. National Trust	No Response
13. Sure SA Ltd	No Objection
14. Heritage Society	No Response

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

The site for this proposal is situated at the lower side of the road, north of Longwood House. A small portion of the complex is within the Longwood House Conservation area, as such will be taken into consideration when assessing this application.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



THE PROPOSAL

Barn View is currently un-occupied with its previous use being a residential care home (Use Class C2). The applicant now wishes to change the use of the building into social housing development (Use Class C1), which will comprise ten units of one bedroom accommodation.

Diagram 1: Existing Layout

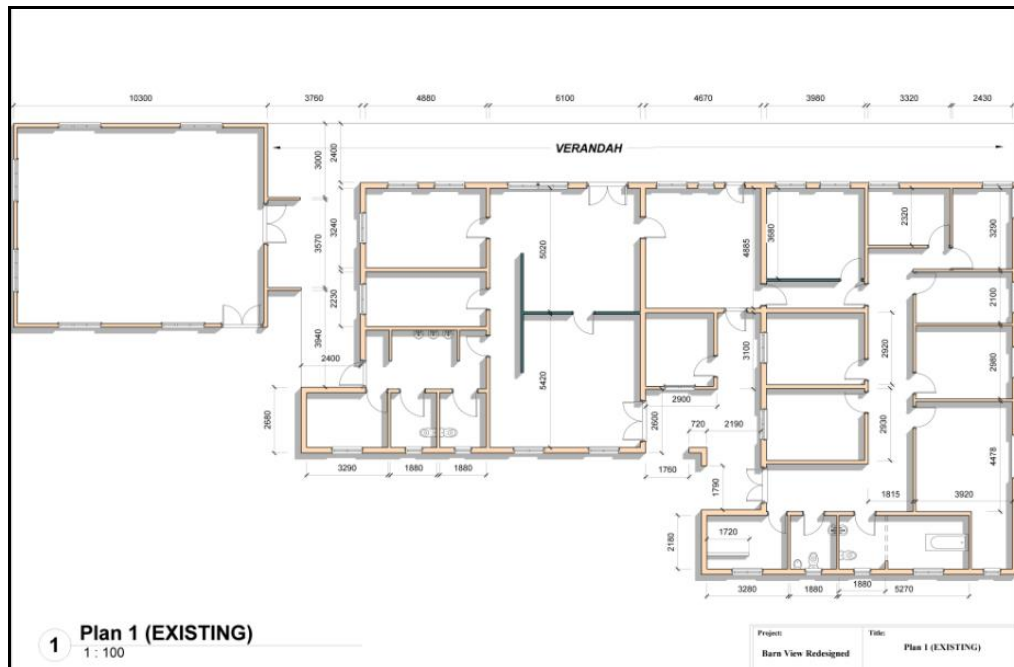


Diagram 2: Existing Elevations

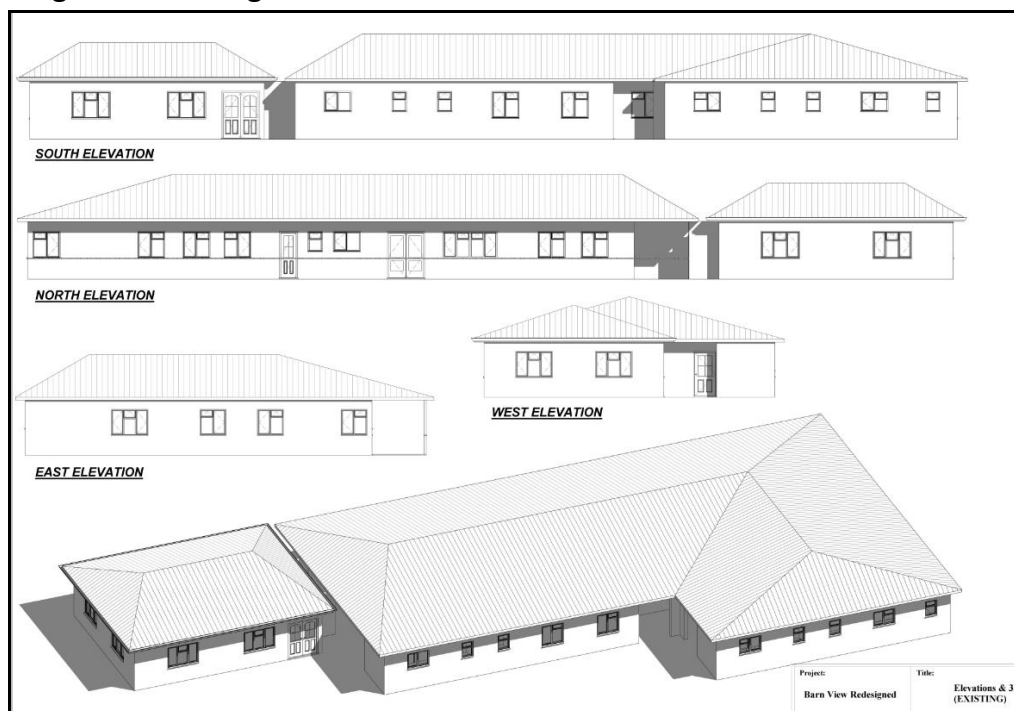
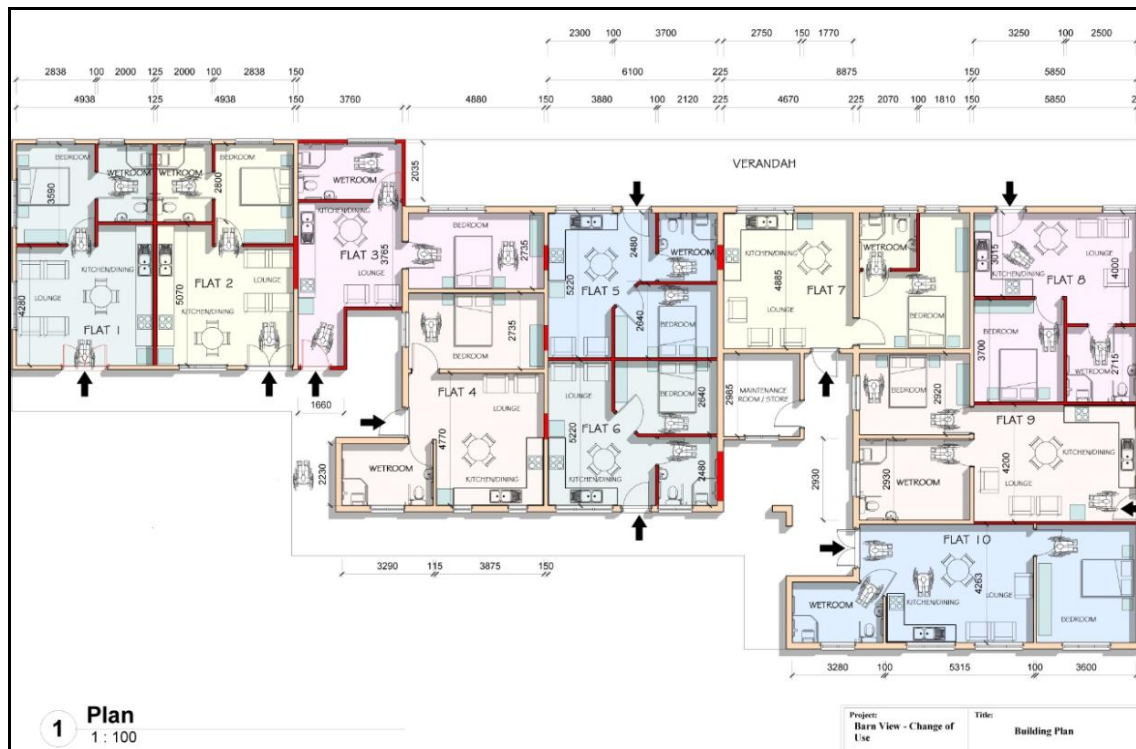
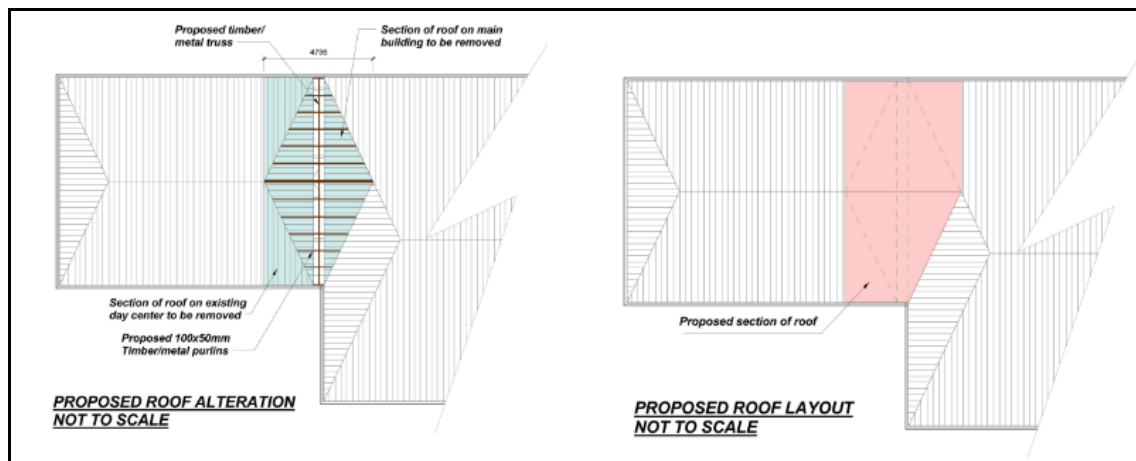


Diagram 3: Proposed Floor Layout



In order to undertake these changes, alterations will be made to join the existing day centre to the main building, which will involve removing a section of roof from both buildings and constructing a single truss and purlins to form a new section of roof.

Diagram 4: Proposed Roof Alteration



Secondly, a number of internal and external changes are required to form individual units. These will be elaborated on in sections to provide a clear understanding of the works involved. Electricity and water already exists at the property, as well as a sewage connection. Connect St Helena Ltd has advised the existing cable is to be upgraded for the additional load for the electricity.

In regards to the layout, all the units have been designed and catered for tenants with disabilities. Each unit will have a dedicated wetroom, bedroom and open planned kitchen lounge area.

Diagram 5: Existing Day Centre

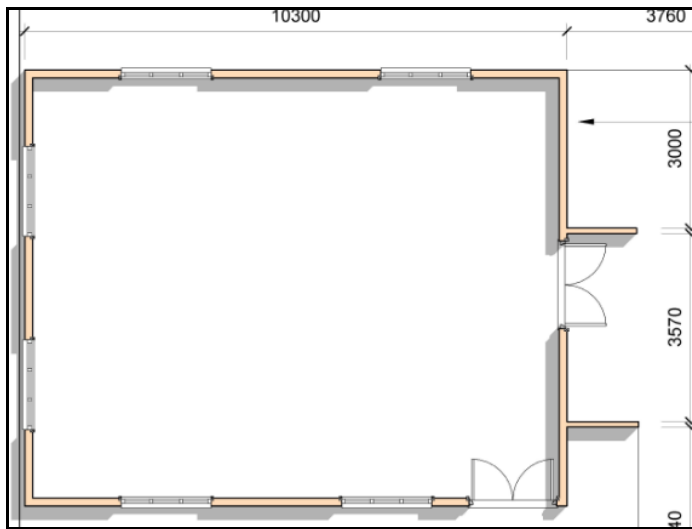
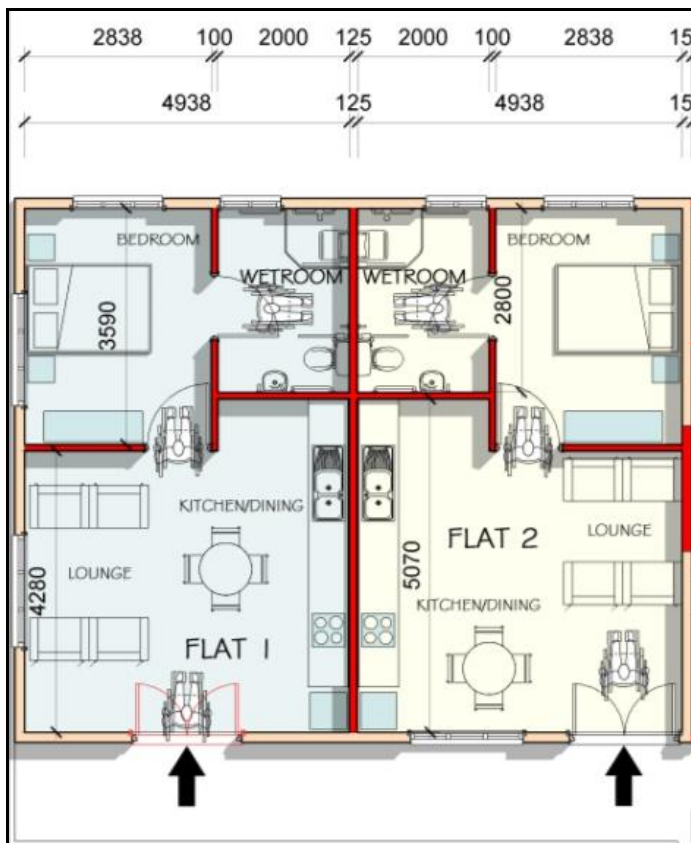


Diagram 6: Proposed Flats 1 & 2



As can be seen in diagram 5, the day centre is currently one large room with six windows, two on each elevation with exception to the east and two French doors. One door exiting the south elevation and other facing the main building to the east. Works

proposed to form Flats 1 and 2 consists of removing the eastern double door and blocking up of the opening. Secondly, installing a double door in place of the existing window on the southern elevation of the building, to provide an entrance into flat one. Thirdly, construct internal walls to form each room and part the building into two self-contained units. Lastly, re-align the two existing windows and install additional windows for the wetrooms on the northern elevation.

Diagram 7: Existing Layout

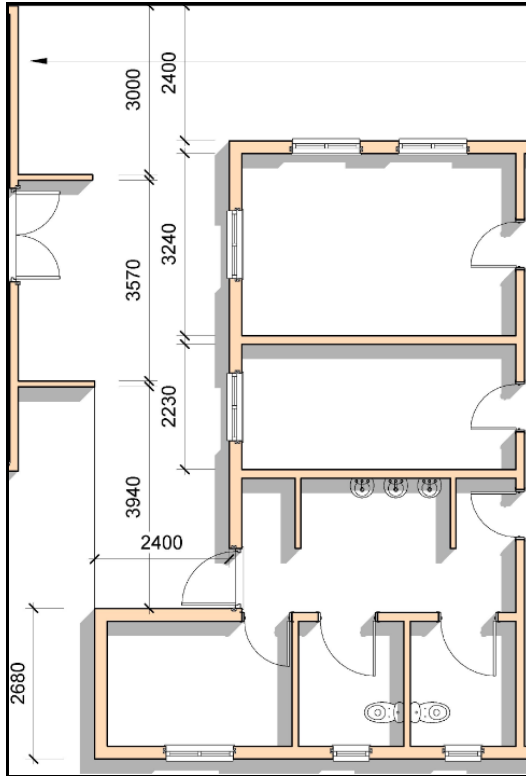


Diagram 8: Proposed Flat 3 & 4



Flat three will be constructed between the existing day centre and main building. As indicated in diagram 4, this area will now be roofed over to provide the additional floor area space required. Access into this flat be will via a single entrance on the southern elevation, where it will lead into the kitchen, dining and lounge area. The layout of this unit will be in a 'T' shape, which utilizes a section of the existing building. This section will consist of the bedroom with works needed to remove the west facing window to form an opening, and removal of the north east facing windows where a larger single window will be installed. The wet room will be constructed north of the kitchen.

Flat four will utilise the footprint of the existing building, where the existing toilet block will be partially demolished to form the open planned kitchen, dining and lounge area. An opening will be created to allow access for the bedroom and existing room converted to make the wetroom.

Diagram 8: Existing Layout

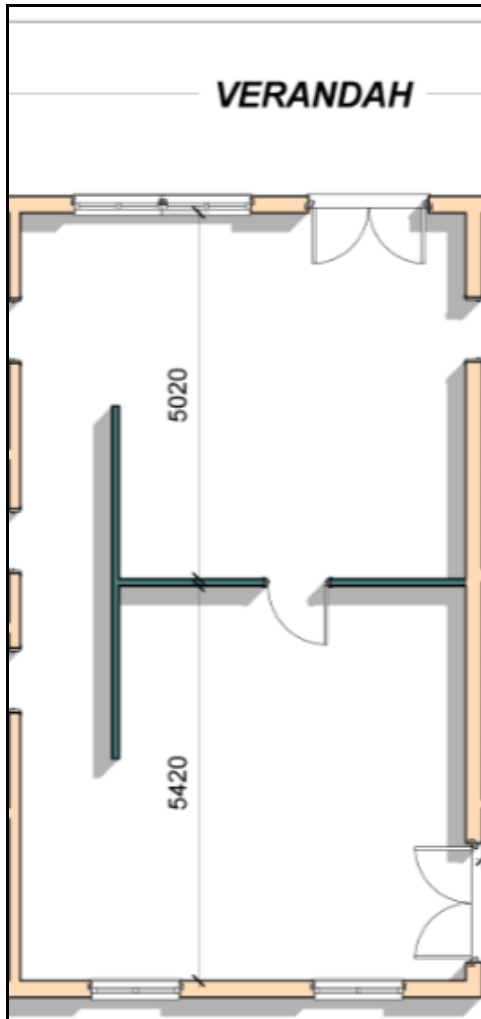


Diagram 9: Proposed Flat 5 & 6



The existing internal wall, as can be seen in diagram 8, above will be demolished. The window on the north east elevation will be re-aligned and French door removed and blocked up. A single door will form the entrance into flat five. New internal walls will be constructed to separate the bedroom, kitchen dining and lounge area. It is worth noting, there will not be any windows proposed in the wetroom, however other means of ventilation will be required to satisfy Building Control. Flat six will have access from the south west elevation with a single doorway. The French door will be removed and blocked up. A larger window will be installed in the kitchen, dining and lounge area to allow for sufficient light and ventilation. Again all new walls will be constructed to part each room.

Diagram 10: Existing Layout

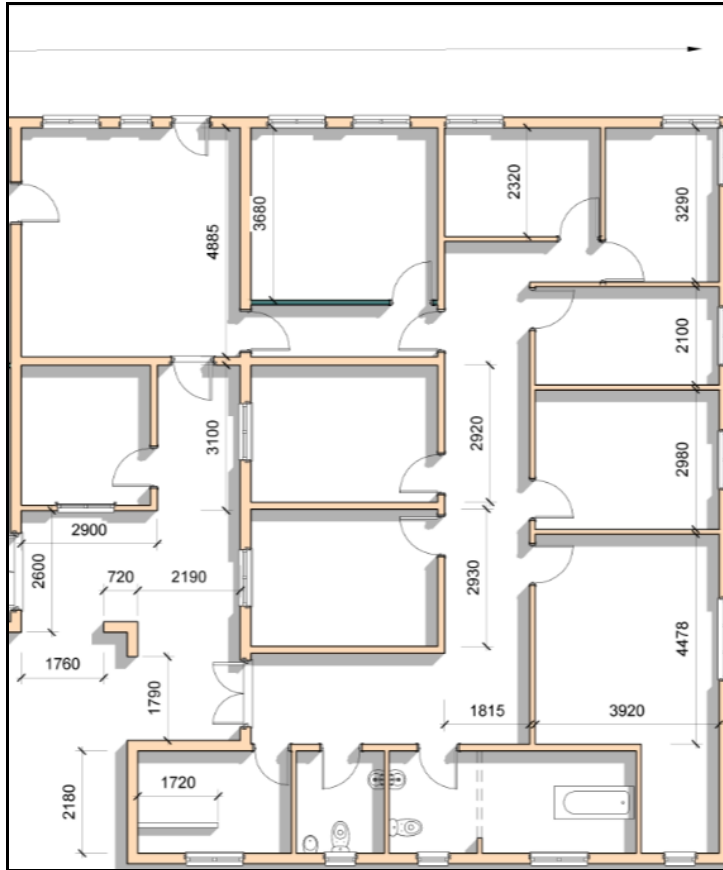
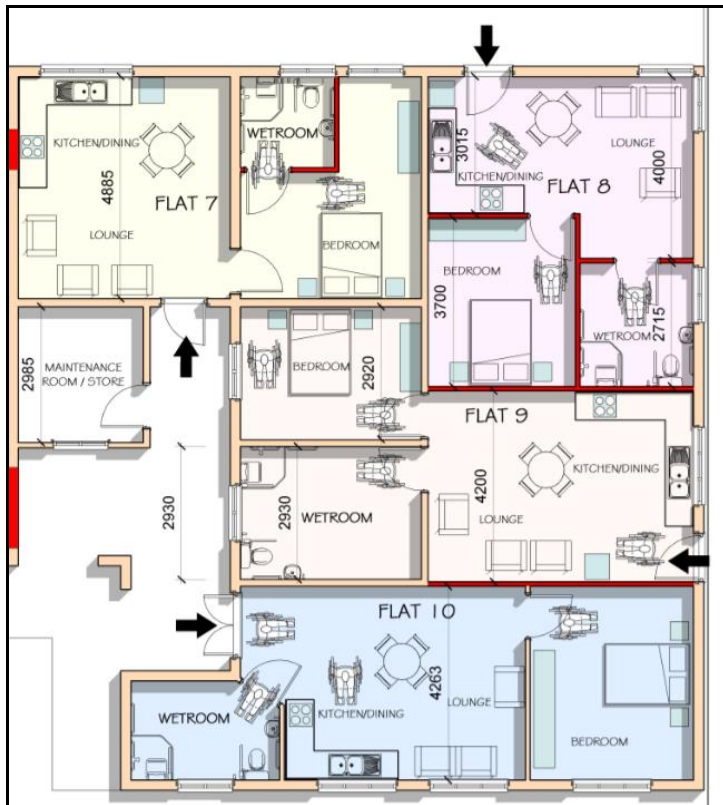


Diagram 11: Proposed Flat 7, 8, 9 & 10



Works to create flat seven will include blocking up of the existing doorways, as well as constructing a wet room within the new bedroom. Access into this unit will be gained from the existing door next to the proposed maintenance store room. The single window on the northern elevation of proposed flat eight will be removed, and replaced with a single door. Internal walls within this section will be demolished, with a new internal walls constructed to allow a convenient layout for the bedroom and wet-room, which will take advantage of the existing window on the eastern elevation. The existing window on the eastern elevation, within flat nine will be repositioned to accommodate the entrance into the unit. The proposed bedroom and wet-room requires no modifications to the existing walls. Finally, the existing toilet and bathroom walls will be demolished to form the open planned kitchen, dining, lounge area, and new wall constructed to form the bedroom. The wet room will use the existing room, next to the entrance of this unit. The existing bathroom and toilet windows will be removed and replaced with larger ones.

Diagram 12: Drainage Layout

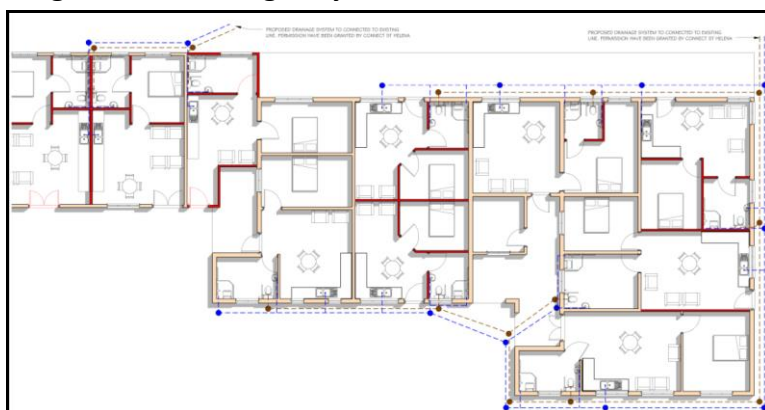
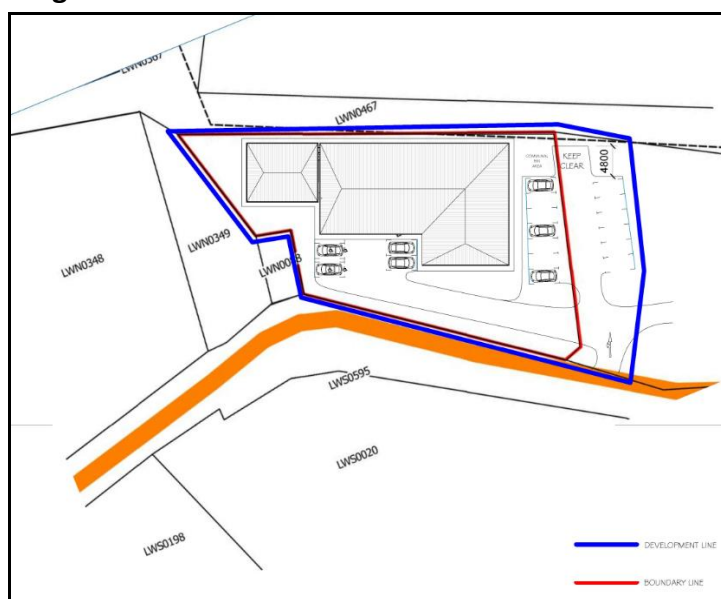


Diagram 13: Site Plan



Sewage and grey water will be connected to the existing public system, where Connect St Helena has no objections and given written permission to the applicant. In terms of parking, eleven off-road parking spaces are available.

REPRESENTATIONS

Four representation has been received from Mr Basil George, Mrs Pamela Ward Pearce, Ms S Ivy Ellick and Ms Shirley Ketchen in respect of the proposed development. The representation raise number of issues regarding the use of public funds and money raised by the public for specialist facilities and for the development of facilities to support people disability and provide respite for families and carers with family members with disability, however many of these are not planning and development issues and only those issues raise relating to planning and development matters are summarised as follows:

- Barn View was built from money raised from the public with the specific use for persons with disability including giving respite for parents taking care of such persons and a large extension was later added with the express purpose for use by persons with disabilities.
- Barn View has always been an establishment dedicated for the use of and for disabled people, as evidenced by the plaque and the building has been provided for the provision of care, help and support for disabled people and their families in the form of respite care;
- facility is an invaluable resource providing much needed support to increasingly older clients whose parents and main care providers and the demand is likely to increase in future given the demographics of the island and if this resource is removed it will likely put increasing strain on other institutions or care facilities;
- challenge the decision for the property to be handed over to the Property Division St Helena Government without consultation with the DPAS;
- authority for the purpose of providing Social Housing without first consulting with the main stakeholders in the property – the Disabled Persons Aid Society and the general public;
- provision for this facility and service has lapsed, possibly due to an oversight by the appropriate department, but the need is still there and hopefully could be considered at a future departmental policy review and converting Barn View to social housing would hamper this initiative while, at the same time, ignoring the generosity and commitment of the island community in the not too distant past;
- there may well be more social housing required but there are other vacant premises owned by SHG which could serve this need, particularly the former Longwood Infant School buildings and Sundale in Half Tree Hollow;

- this appears to be a land grab by SHG and suspect this has been suggested by a narrowly focused approach to community needs and involvement.

OFFICERS RESPONSE

Members of the public are clearly passionate about this building, which was generously funded by the public for its purpose to serve those with physical impairments and provide respite and support for their families. Unfortunately from a planning perspective these representations are not material planning considerations. However, the views expressed have been forwarded to the applicant to address them personally, if they so wish. Material planning considerations are those related to the impact of the proposed change of the building may have on the neighbouring environment and the matters related to design and appearance of building or effects on a propose alterations on the adjoining conservation area.

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

The applicants justification for the proposed development as set out in the Design and Access Statement is the development site lies close to the centre of Longwood and the development through the change of use class and internal alterations from a former residential care home provide 10 single mobility friendly bedroom apartments for much needed social/specialist housing. The service and facilities for the people with disability and support for their families, previously from this building, will now be provided at 6 properties being made available at the Piccolo Estate this includes respite facilities.

Other site and properties were considered in the Longwood area but were deemed not suitable. The current site provides synergies with other SHG service providers. The Land and Development Control Plan ("LDCP") at SI.4 states that planning permission will be granted for the extension of Barn View. However since the LDCP was written care is now being provided in a different setting to allow residents to feel less institutionalised and therefore the current use class is no longer necessary.

The applicant states that the change of use fits within S.1.4 of the LDCP which enables appropriate and well-located housing development, including for domestic demand. This development meets this principle. Furthermore, S17.1 of the LDCP allows for social developments to ensure sustainable balanced communities are developed and maintained. All tenants at this development will either be single tenants or couples over the age of 55 with mobility issues. These properties will enable tenants to maintain positive relationships with family and friends in an independent setting. Provision for disabilities is an important consideration at S.17 of the LDCP at SI.1 (b).

The National Statistics office forecasts the number of people over 55 on Island will almost double over the next 20 years. An aging population will create demand for more accessible friendly homes which this development will address. Furthermore, in the short to medium term it is envisaged that by moving some existing tenants to these homes this will reduce under occupation in the existing GLH housing stock.

The Application site is next to the existing government landlord housing (Lady Margret Fields) and Deasons Community Centre to the east. To the south of the site sits bare Crown Land and Longwood House. To the east bare Crown Land and Bertrand's Cottage and to the north bare Crown land.

The Design and Access statement section of this statement describes the proposal in more detail however all dwellings are single bedrooms, modestly sized accessibility friendly apartment with all accommodation at ground floor level. The dwellings will be accessed via Longwood Road which runs off Longwood Avenue. All of the apartments will be accessed through the existing driveway which will provide parking and access to the apartments.

The proposed development will share a right of way access with Lady Margret Fields. The properties are currently separated by a simple post and wire fence which will remain.

Pre-application Advice: Pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission from the Planning Service regarding the principle of a small residential development in the context of the Land and Development Control Plan.

Planning History of the site: The application site is effectively two buildings on a single plot of land which were used as a residential home. It is understood that funds were raised for the facility in the late 1980's to complete construction of the residential home.

Recent Residential History in Longwood: Whilst all planning applications must be assessed on their own individual merit, consideration for other planning decisions can help understand the application and the planning departments approach to accessing housing applications.

1. 2017/45 – 5 x 2 Bedroom Dwellings – Colt Sheds
2. 2017/88 – 1 Bedroom Dwelling – Longwood Hangings
3. 2018/56 – 2 Bedroom Dwelling – Nr Longwood Gate
4. 2018/64 – 3 Bedroom Dwelling – Deadwood
5. 2018/58 – 2 Bedroom Dwelling - Deadwood
6. 2018/80 – 3 Bedroom Dwelling – Nr Longwood Gate

7. 2019/65 – 2 Bedroom Dwelling – Longwood Hangings
8. 2019/70 – Mixed tenure of 28 Dwellings-Bottom Woods CDA

Design: The change of use and development proposal involves creating 10 mobility friendly single bedroom apartments. The development site is next to other government landlord and private sector houses and a residential home. A full appraisal of the planning context of this application in terms of how the development accords with planning policy and housing has been undertaken and set in this statement. The applicants have worked with the design technician to ensure the proposed development and designs does not impact on the adjacent developments and also embrace sustainable and efficient construction principles.

Use: The applicants have worked closing with the Saint Helena Governments Child and Adult Social Care, National Statistics Office and Housing Department to understand the Islands long term accessibility friendly housing needs. The development of this redundant building is next to existing government landlord housing and close to a residential home and other residential properties. The development constitutes an efficient and suitable use of land within an existing village setting, thereby contributing to the housing supply and the sustainability of Longwood. The proposal is for the change of use and conversation of a vacant building into 10 single bedroom accessibility friendly homes. The building will also provide some parking spaces at the front of the building for use of the residents and visitors.

Layout: The proposed layout will incorporate all of the existing building off Longwood Road. The apartments are sited within the existing structure which enables the existing orientation to be retained thus protecting amenities of the existing dwellings.

Scale of Development: The scale of the development is considered appropriate for both the site and village of Longwood. The proposed new dwellings are on single level within the existing building ensuring the new development is in scale and harmony with the surrounding dwellings and buildings.

Appearance: The new dwellings will utilise the existing building and will be similar to other dwellings on Island with an individual door for access and windows.

Access: Access to the development will be from Longwood Road and tenants and guests will be provided with 11 parking spaces of which 4 are disabled friendly. A low number of parking spaces are required as most tenants will not have a personal vehicle due to their needs.

Each dwelling will comply with building regulations as regards access and each have the bedroom and bathroom accommodation on the ground floor increasing the functionality for tenants. With regards to the overall access the site is well located at the edge of Longwood with easy access to the local supermarket by foot and bus stop. Furthermore, the development provides easy access for other SHG service providers.

Summary: The development will provide small scale high quality mobility friendly dwellings for people over 55 who are eligible for government landlord housing. The proposed development is for a change of use only as the existing features will be retained and all construction work is internally only. Therefore the development will continue to sit within rural village fringe setting sympathetically.

The development is not considered to create any adverse impact on the highway, the safety of the user or to have a negative impact on the neighbouring amenities. The development is, therefore, considered to constitute good design by maximising the use of an existing building as demonstrated within the design and access statement.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

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

- Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1 a, b,
- Social Infrastructure Policies SI1 a, b, SI.4, SI.12
- Housing: Policy H9
- 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
- Built Heritage

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

As highlighted in the applicant's design and access statement the building is currently vacant and has been handed back to Property Division by Children & Adult Social Care Directorate. The applicant has taken advantage of its size and location to provide much needed social housing for the island. The building is in a condition, where multiple units of accommodation can be created, without having to undertake significant works. The appearance will not negatively detract the existing amenity of the area or the setting of the Longwood House Conservation area. Furthermore, there will be alterations to the buildings design for access and usage by people with disabilities, thus meets the requirements within the LDCP. Overall the change of use will provide some much sought after social housing, without additional strain on existing services.

As the proposal is a deviation from the social infrastructure policy SI.4, where permission would be granted for the expansion Barn View this will need to be recommended to Governor-in-Council for final decision in accordance with Section 23[2(b)(ii)] of the Land Planning and Development Control Ordinance 2013.