

## Planning Officer's Report – LDCA MAY 2021

<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>2021/09</b> – Proposed Covered Area and Installation Photovoltaic Panel System to Mantis Hotel
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Permission in <b>Full</b>
<b>REGISTERED</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
<b>APPLICANT</b>	St Helena Hotel Development Limited
<b>PARCEL</b>	JT050045 & JT050012
<b>SIZE</b>	0.34 acres (1402m <sup>2</sup> )
<b>LAND OWNER</b>	Private
<b>LOCALITY</b>	The Mantis Hotel, Main Street, Jamestown
<b>ZONE</b>	Intermediate Zone
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	Jamestown Conservation Area
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Hotel
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Independent Newspaper on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	None Received
<b>DECISION ROUTE</b>	<del>Delegated</del> / <b>LDCA</b> / <del>EXCO</del>

### A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Water Division	No Objection
2. Sewage Division	No Objection
3. Energy Division	No Objection
4. Fire & Rescue	No Response
5. Roads Section	No Objection
6. Property Division	No Response
7. Environmental Management	No Response
8. Public Health	No Response
9. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response

10. St Helena Police Services	Not Consulted
11. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted
12. Enterprise St Helena (ESH)	No Objection
13. National Trust	No Response
14. Heritage Society	No Response

## B. PLANNING OFFICER’S APPRAISAL

### LOCALITY & ZONING

The development site is a mid-terrace and end of terrace buildings on the west side of Main Street in Jamestown operating as a hotel and banqueting complex. This is a group of Grade II listed buildings within the Jamestown Conservation Area. The application site is within the Intermediate Zone. The rear of the buildings is very prominent from a number vantage point, but in particular from the Jacob’s Ladder, which is to the south-west building The rear of the buildings also faces Narrabacks.

#### Diagram 1: Locality



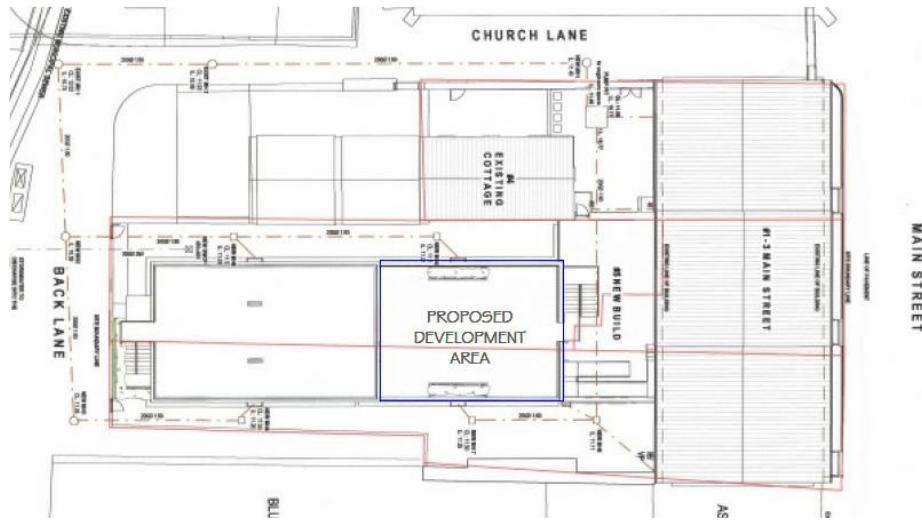
### THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to construction of a Pergola on the top terrace at the rear at the Mantis Hotel building. The roof of the Pergola will be used for mounting a PV Solar Panel System to help lower the Hotels carbon footprint and provide saving on their utility costs. The pergola will cover the whole of this terrace area have a solid roof with a gentle angled roof to enable the installation of the PV panels.

This is a large open terrace area, measuring 12.25m by 8.63m with a low wall along the length of its sides with railing on top. It is used as a seating area for the consumption of food and drink and provides a reasonable quality of environment. The

terrace currently has several sets of outdoor furniture consisting of several chairs and tables with umbrellas on it.

**Diagram 2: Site Plan and Layout**

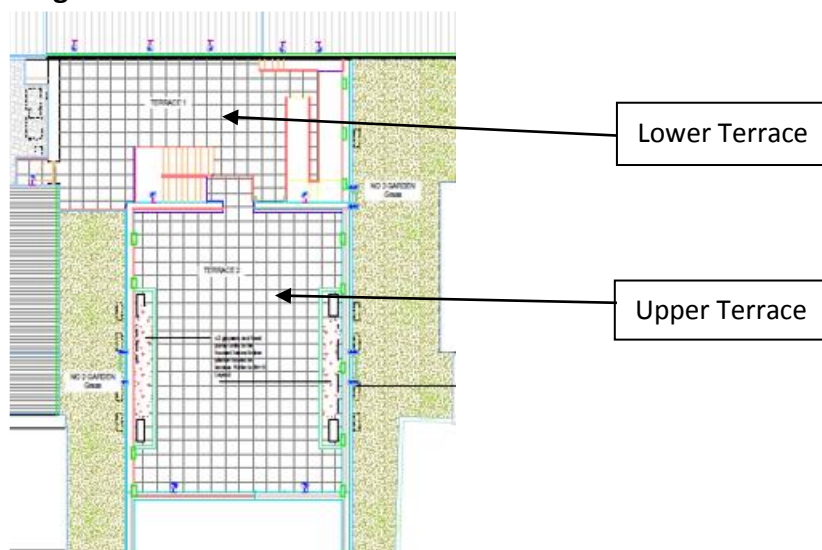


At the western end, facing unto Narrabacks is a further three storey height and provides number of bedrooms on each floor with a flat roof and low parapet wall. The roof has number of AC units and covers a large part of the roof area. Also erected around the AC unit is steel frame structure. It is difficult to the objective of the steel structure other that it may have been erected to cover over the AC units and provide weather protection, but has never been completed.

**ASSESTMENT OF THE BUILDING AND LOCATION**

The rear of the Grade I listed building is very modern in its design to create the hotel accommodation at the rear of the main building. Whilst the main building is used for the purposes of restaurant and banqueting activities, however majority of the bedrooms are in the modern rear building.

**Diagram 3: Rear Terraced Areas**



There is lower terrace which is accessed at the ground floor level and which provides access to the rear part two and three storey buildings which have little or no resemblance to the architecture of the main historic building facing Main Street. The upper terrace is accessed by set open staircase which also provides access to bedrooms. There is also an emergency stair case on the Narraback street elevation building.

The listed building restoration and refurbishment and the development of the rear extension has been design to provide an open feel to the area and due to the linear form of the rear area and the new buildings at the rear almost give a feel as they are buildings related to Narrabacks. There are number buildings that open out on to Narrabacks, more noticeably the Blue Lantern restaurant to the south of the Mantis Hotel is accessed only from Narraback. Narrabacks is a narrow one-way street running parallel to Main Street for almost its entire length.

#### **Diagram 4: Existing View of the Terrace Area**



With the height of the main listed hotel building and the rear new building the open terrace is welcome break from the built form that is now much changed from its original humble beginning. Review the details of the building, it would appear that the design approach is deliberate to retain an element of the open feel and to create and enjoy a sitting out space.

#### **Planning History**

The building has been in hotel use for number years and was the Island's flagship hotel complex following the opening of the airport to encourage tourism. The restoration and refurbish works and the extension has been major building investment by the government. The extension at the rear is extensive to enable the development and operation of a quality hotel on the Island. The lower and upper terrace now provide the only outdoor space for sitting out to enjoy the environment.

The only relevant development application for the building were:

- **2014/62. Screening opinion request**

To determine the impact of the proposed development to meet the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

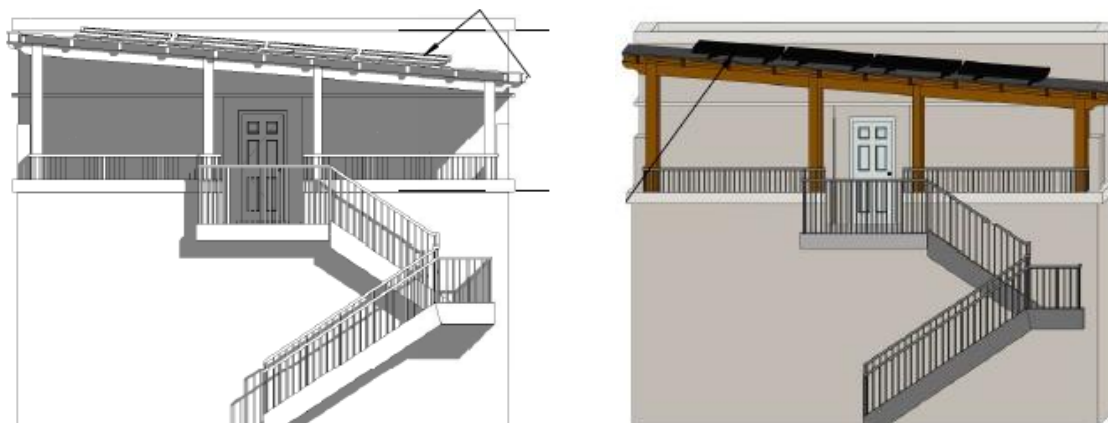
- **2015/48 - approved in August 2015**

Change of use of office buildings and new build construction to provide a 30 bedroom hotel comprising guest accommodation, inside bar and restaurant, ancillary cooking and housekeeping service areas, roof top bar and terraced rooftop seating areas

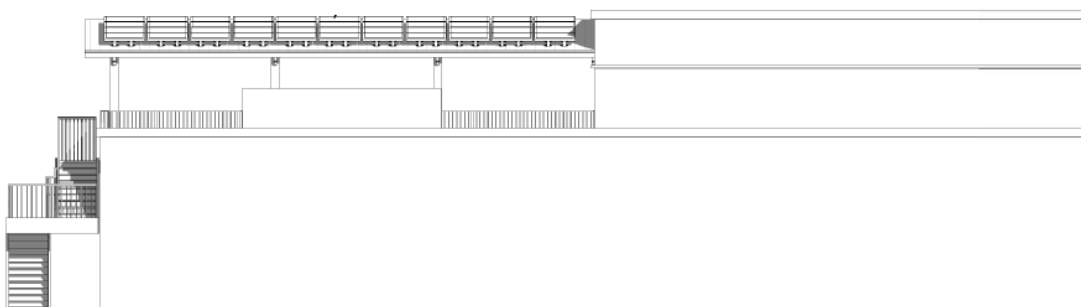
### **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPSAL**

The issue for consideration is the erection of a wooden structure (Pergola) that will cover over the area that has been provided to retain openness of this area. It is the erection of this structure that is an issues to consider. The installation of the photovoltaic solar panel system over the new roof area is more incidental, although it does raise number of issues of its aesthetics and whether it in cognisance with the historic setting of this building at the level of the installation when there may other better alternative location.

#### **Diagram 5 and 6: Proposed East Elevation**



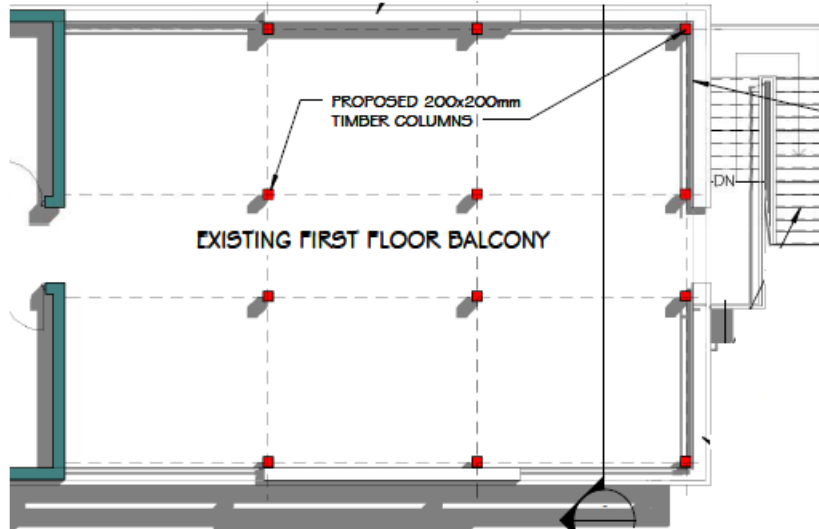
#### **Diagram 7: Proposed North Elevation**



It is considered that retaining the open terrace, as it has been designed, should be a major consideration. The issues raised by the applicant that there are management

issues and the area is a heat trap appears very weak. Most open terraces will have table with umbrellas that open out to provide protection from the sun and at certain times of the day, the open element is there to be enjoyed. Covering over this area and creating close feel and visual built form needs to be resisted and it is considered to compromise design objectives for this development.

**Diagram 7: Proposed Supports for the Pergola**



Following the assessment of the proposal, the applicant was advised of the issues and potential adverse impact arising from the development and requested to reconsider the proposed development. The applicant was also advised of the Planning Officer's in respect of the proposal. In response to the applicant provide its justification for the proposed development and the various options that were considered. The whole background to the proposed development is install PV panel to reduce the building's carbon footprint and hence reduce the energy costs.

**Diagram 9: Proposed Pergola With PV Panels – 3D Perspective**



The erection of the pergola to create a roof space for the installation of the PV panels is one option and is considered as a higher priority for implementation as the hotel is at not operational due to travel restriction to the Island. From an operational and

management view point of the hotel management may an important consideration and a priority, however from a planning and design impact perspective the priority should to be implement those optional that have least impact on the integrity of the building. If after other installation there is still need for PV panel installation other options can be considered.

For the purpose of the proposed assessment the issue here is not whether development permission should be granted for the PV panel and is it considered appropriate for this location, but whether the proposed erection of pergola is appropriate in the first instance. .

### **C. POLICY CONSIDERATION**

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

- Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1(a, b and g)
- Sewage, storm and Drainage: Policies SD1(b, c) and SD7
- Built Heritage Policies: BH1 (c), BH.2, BH.3

The assessment of the proposed development against the objectives of Built Heritage Policies of LDCP is difficult in that the rear area of the site is much changed from its historic past. Much of the alterations and extensions at the rear very modern and probably has little historic character/relationship to the main building, however assessment against the Built Heritage policy of the LDCP is relevant. In particular assessment against policy BH.1(c) which states that :-

*Development in Historic Conservation Areas will be permitted only if it enhances and protects the character of the Area by reference to scale, proportion, details and external materials of the proposed development in relation to those of the Historic Conservation Area.*

It is considered that the proposed erection of wooden structure to create a covered area is not going to enhance or protect the character of this area, but more so it detract from the ambiance of this area and by enclosing the area it will remove the open space of the area and similarly the scale of development and use of material are not in keeping with wider appearance of the area and its surroundings. It detracts from the objectives of policy BH.1(c). The proposed development is also not supported by the policies BH.2 and BH.3 in that the recent extension have now created its own modern character and appearance and the enclosing the terrace area will remove the open space created for sitting out and enjoyment.

### **OFFICER ASSESSMENT**

The proposed erection of the pergola on the upper terrace fails to meet with the requirement of the Built Heritage Policies of the LDCP. On the assessment of the proposal it is considered be not in-keeping with overall character that has been

created to provide open space to enjoy the natural element. The erection of the pergola will create an enclosed space and built form which run for the whole length of the rear of this listed building.

It is recognised that the character of the rear of this building has been considerably changed over the years with clear of the older out buildings and the modern construction which is of pretty “brutal design”, however, the this now has its own modern character and the open terrace now forms an important element of the mass built form and the open terrace provides the separation between the new building in the rear and the old original listed building in the front.