

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA JUNE 2021

APPLICATION	2021/34 – Installation of Photovoltaic Panels
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Permission in Full
REGISTERED	9 th April 2021
APPLICANT	W.A. Thorpe & Sons Ltd
PARCEL	JT040033
LOCALITY	Thorpe's Warehouse, Ex Paramount Cinema, Jamestown
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown Conservation Area
CURRENT USE	Warehouse
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Independent Newspaper on 16th April 2021▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	30 th April 2021
REPRESENTATIONS	None Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Sewage & Water Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Objection - Comments
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 Response

13. Sure SA Ltd

No Objection

14. Heritage Society

Comments

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

The application site is at the former paramount cinema building, currently being used by W.A Thorpe's & Sons as a warehouse. The plot is designated within the Intermediate Zone and within the proposed Jamestown Conservation Area.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



THE PROPOSAL

The request by the applicant is to install 85 photovoltaic panels on the north western and north eastern elevations of the building. This is due to the warehouse having four walk in freezers, which are used to store goods for their supermarket chains. The rationale behind the proposal is to reduce their running costs and carbon footprint by utilising this renewable source of energy. It was determined that the optimal position for the panels are on the North West and north east roof slopes on the building. These panels will raise the profile of the roof by 80mm, where they are to be integrated within the roof system, therefore would result in the removal of the sheeting in those areas affected to accommodate the panels, forming part of the roofing envelope.

Report Author: Shane Williams (Planning Officer)

Authorised: Ismail Mohammed (Chief Planning Officer)

Report Date: 2nd June 2021

Application: 2021/34

Diagram 2: Initial Submission – Layout of the Panels

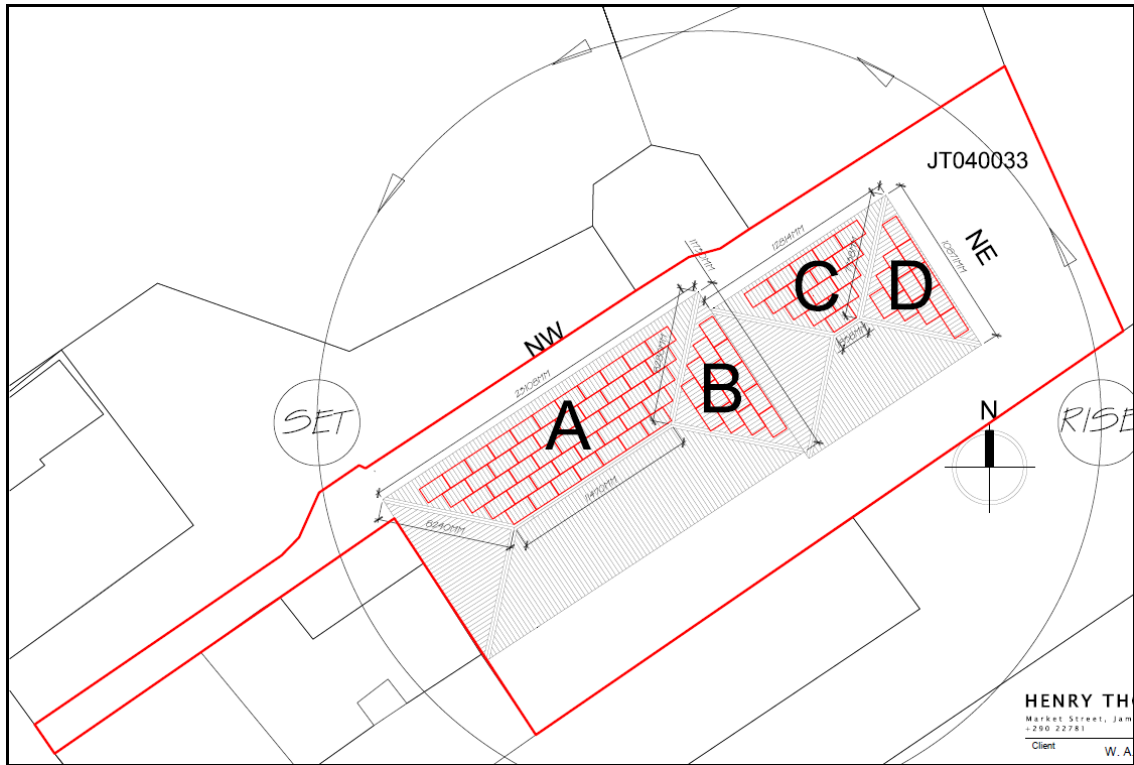
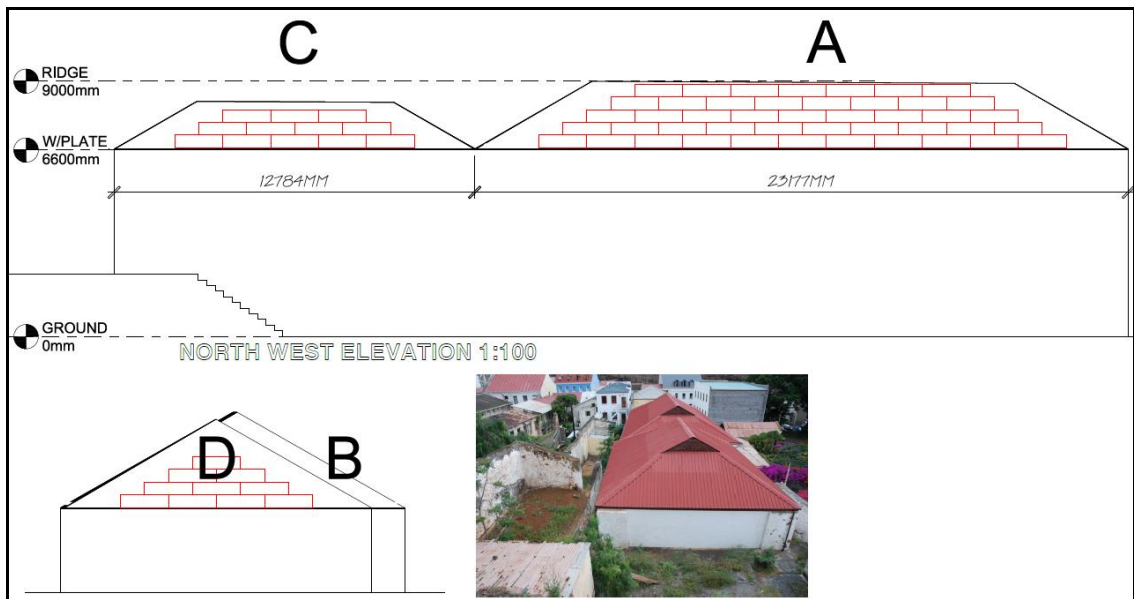


Diagram 3: Initial Submission – Elevational View



POLICY CONSIDERATION

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

- Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1 (a, b)
- Energy Policy: E5
- Built Heritage Policy: BH1 c)

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

No representations was received from the public. Comments was recieved from stakeholders; Connect St Helena Ltd and the Heritage Society.

Connect St Helena: this representation makes following observations:

- the development request is a decision for planning but it 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;
- the company can offer assistance and advice to the developer if requested as to any potential technical or safety issues.

Heritage Society: the representation states:

- building is not listed but within the Jamestown Historic Conservation Area. Generally 'back buildings' in Jamestown are not specifically listed but the appearance of the old cinema is characteristic of older warehouses in the town and may have historic value...;
- under LDCP policies, it is clear that PV panel on roofs such as this application must be designed so they do not adversely affect the character of the building or the conservation area and the application must enhance and protect the character the conservation area in terms of layout, design, scale and siting;
- proposed array of PV panels will be prominent on the southern side of the Castle Gardens and also prominent from the Grand Parade and as such, there is strong likelihood of the panels creating an adverse effect on the conservation area;
- advises that planning office give full consideration to the appearance and layout of the panels and to apply guidelines for their design as available elsewhere; and
- guidelines indicate that proposals may do less harm if there are fewer panels with more roof exposed around the perimeter than if a square ended rectangular pattern is adopted instead of the staggered design currently proposed.'

Officers Response – In assessing this proposal as well as the representation received, it is considered that the panels will not be prominent from the Grand Parade, however will inevitably be more visible from the Castle Gardens. The intention to stagger the panels are beneficial for the applicant as it ensures the roof space can be fully utilised, thereby maximising the number of panels to be installed. However the officers are of the view that where the layout and arrangement of the panels are staggered, the roof surface will become over developed and therefore will have considerable visual impact. Following discussions with the applicant on the proposed design, layout and number of panels to be installed, the applicant has submitted an amended design.

Diagram 4: Revised Submission – Elevations

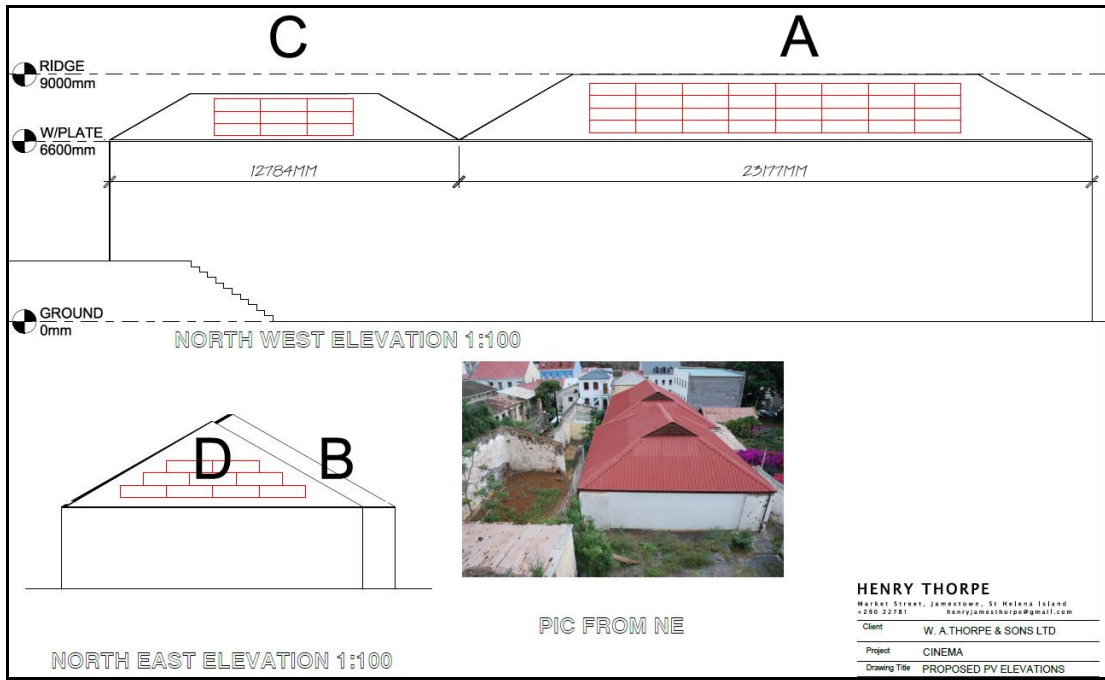
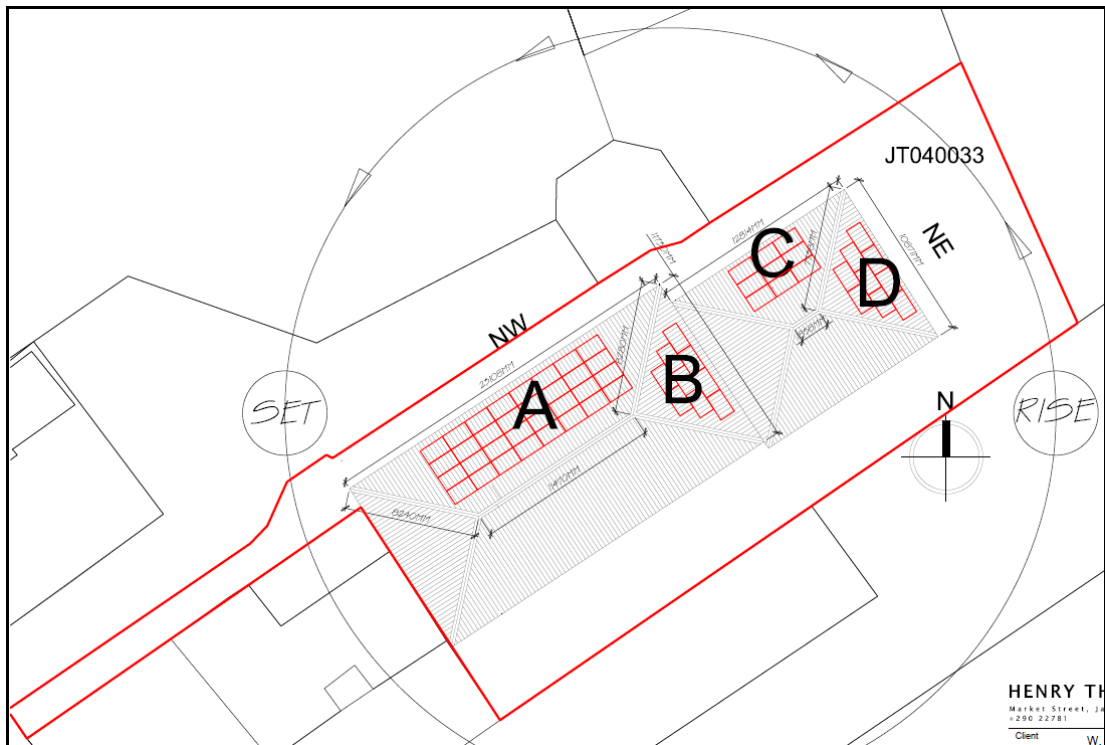


Diagram 5: Revised Submission – Roof Layout



OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Renewable energy is widely encourage as it is beneficial for the environment and in reducing utility costs. The panels will take advantage of the configuration of the roof, where it faces a north westerly and north easterly direction. The panels will be visible from within the confines of the Castle Gardens and with some possible impact from

the Grand Parade. Similarly, this installation will also be visible from number of other higher vantage points around the site due the local terrain.

Having considered the initial submission as indicated in diagrams 2, the layout of the panels was deemed un-acceptable as the panels overpowered the roof visually. As a result of this, the Planning Officer negotiated a revised scheme with applicant and a revised proposal was submitted for consideration with a more symmetrical design, which has reduced the amount of coverage to allow for the perimeter of the roof to be exposed.

As such the revised design has reduced the number of panels from 85 to 59 in total. The configuration is now considered more acceptable and aesthetically pleasing as it is of a rectangular design on the north western elevations. It was advised that a staggered approach for the north easterly slope would be considered appropriate provided the panels would be more centralised. Further mitigation was also put forward by the applicant, where they are willing to paint the roof in anthracite grey.

In conclusion, the proposed development with a painting of the roof in anthracite grey it is considered more acceptable, as the design is sympathetic to the character of the building and will not be intrusive on the setting of the conservation area.