Planning Officer's Report – LDCA JUNE 2021

APPLICATION	**2021/41 –** Proposed Change of Corrugated Iron to IBR Sheeting & Install Photovoltaic Panels
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Permission in **Full**
REGISTERED	11th May 2021
APPLICANT	Gregory Cairns-wicks
PARCEL	JT040017
LOCALITY	Rear of Essex House, Jamestown
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown Conservation Area
CURRENT USE	Dwelling in construction
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: ▪ Sentinel Newspaper on 13th May 2021 ▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	27th May 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 Response

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 rear of the GIS Building, Essex House, where development permission was granted for the building in 2017. The plot is designated within the Intermediate Zone and within the proposed Jamestown Conservation Area.

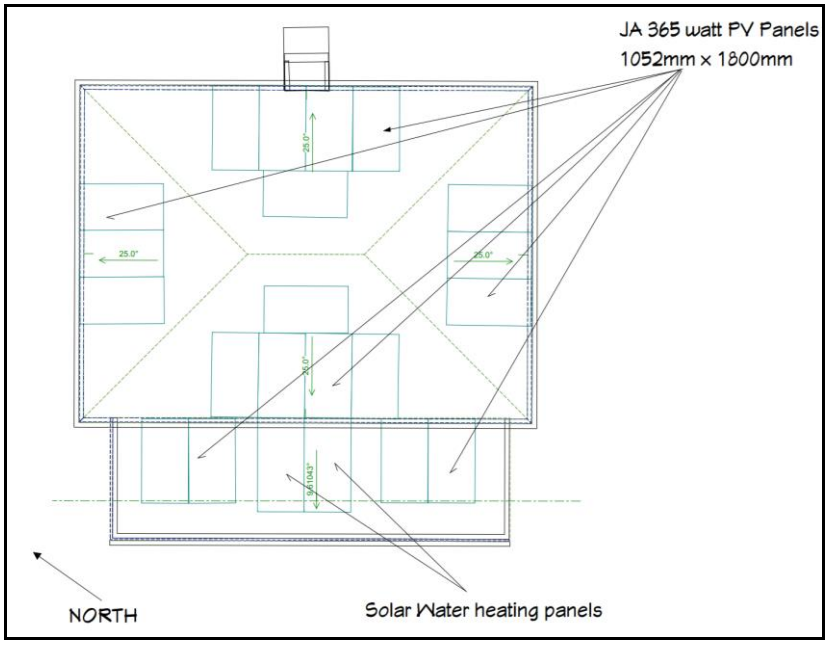
Diagram 1: Location Plan

THE PROPOSAL

The request is to install 20 photovoltaic panels measuring 1052mm x 1800mm as well as change the roof sheeting from corrugated iron to an inverted box rib (IBR) profile. The developer has proposed 3 panels on the north and south elevations, 5 panels on

the east and west elevations of the hip roof, and 4 on the lean-to-roof section on the front elevation. The benefit to changing the roof sheet profile is that IBR is considered more robust than corrugated iron, offering the much needed support for mounting photovoltaic panels. The roof colour will be grey to reduce the visual impact of the panels. It is the applicant's intention to have both dwelling units completely off grid, eliminating the need to connect to the mains electricity.

Diagram 2 and 3: Layout of Panels & Elevations



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;

Heritage Society: the representation states:
'From the Castle Gardens this roof will be visible in the same view as the proposed panels on the old cinema roof therefore a consistent approach would be advisable. The Heritage Society would therefore recommend the same design approach that led to the revised application for the old cinema. As such the two upper horizontal panels should be omitted, leaving 4 and 3 panels on each of the opposing sides of main hipped roof. Any changes to the roof colour needs to be carefully considered in relation the LDCP roofing policy for the conservation area.'

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

- Energy Policy: E5
- Built Heritage Policy: BH1 c)

OFFICER ASSESSMENT
Policy E5 reads 'Development permission will be granted for the installation on existing buildings of solar hot water and solar electrical generation panels and related equipment. In the case of buildings of architectural or historic interest and in National Conservation Areas, the design and siting of the panels are to be such that they do not adversely affect the character of the building…'

In this assessment, consideration is given to the impact on the building as well as the landscape within which it is situated. Albeit there are a number of rooftop installations within Jamestown that has been recognised for a number of years, which may not be considered aesthetically pleasing; with the popular increase of these systems a holistic approach needs to be undertaken. This is where guidance is now being sought using Historic England as St Helena does not currently have any supporting guidance for these type of installations.

In assessing this particular proposal for the photovoltaic panels, it was considered that the siting of the panels would not be acceptable in their current format. The officers advised the applicant that the panels should be sited further away from the roof edge on all elevations to provide a perimeter of sheeting around the panels, where the

applicant was content with this request. The officers then advised that the two horizontal panels on the west and east elevations should be omitted to ensure a more coherent appearance. The idea is to have the panels become a feature within the roofscape without having any adverse visual impact particular from vantage points such as the viewing platform at Jacobs Ladder or even the Castle Gardens. The applicant stated that the number of panels proposed had been calculated to ensure both dwelling units can operate completely off-grid, therefore removal of these two panels would have an impact on the ability to achieve their objective. There is a possibility that the panels could be sited vertically alongside the other four panels, which would mean the end panels being approximately 100 – 200mm away from the hip rafters of the roof. The applicant was of the opinion that he did not want to site the panels in close proximity to the hip of the roof, along with the uncertainty of how they may look.

In conclusion, the change of sheeting from the previously approved profile of corrugated iron to IBR as well as the principle of photovoltaic panels on the building can be supported, however to ensure the best possible design for that building and to remedy its impacts on the setting of the conservation area, these two panels in the officers opinion needs to be relocated or alternatively a more powerful system, which relies on a reduced number of panels should be installed.