

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA DECEMBER 2021

APPLICATION	2021/70 – Proposed Access Road & Alterations/Extensions to Existing House
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Permission in Full
REGISTERED	26 th August 2021
APPLICANT	Russell Harrison
PARCEL	BA0050
SIZE	0.42 acres (1738m ²)
LOCALITY	Cow Grass Flats, Ball Alley, Blue Hill
ZONE	Coastal
CONSERVATION AREA	Sandy Bay
CURRENT USE	Residential
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sentinel Newspaper on 26th August 2021▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	9 th September 2021
REPRESENTATIONS	Two Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Sewage & Water Division	No Response
2. Energy Division	No Objection
3. Fire & Rescue	No Response
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Division	No Response
6. Environmental Management	No Response
7. Public Health	No Response
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. St Helena Police Services	Not Consulted
10. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted

Report Author: Shane Williams (Planning Officer)

Authorised: Ismail Mohammed (Chief Planning Officer)

Report Date: 1st December 2021

Application: 2021/70

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 situated within the Ball Alley area, where the property is known as Cow Grass Flats. It is an isolated plot of land located within a remote area of Blue Hill, where the plot is designated within the Coastal Zone and Sandy Bay Conservation Area.

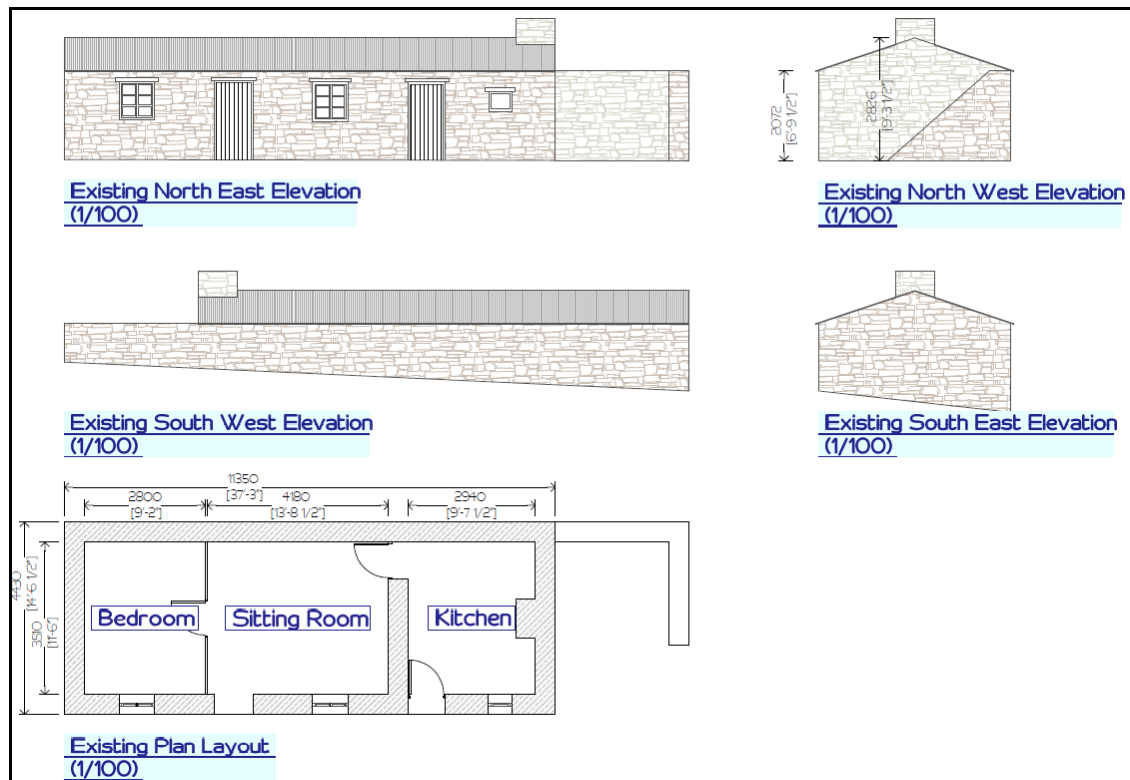
Diagram 1: Location Plan



EXISTING SITE

The plot measures just shy of half an acre, where the topography of the land is relatively steep with no vehicular access to the plot. On the land there is an existing house that has been sitting un-occupied for a number of years. The dwelling is a simple three room layout, old stone masonry building typically known as an Island Long House, likely to be built around late 19th or early 20th century. However the building itself is not listed within the Crallen Report. The house is surrounded by dense vegetation with some clearing carried out in recent months. The building is in a state of disrepair due to be vacant and unoccupied for number of years.

Diagram 2: Existing House Layout & Elevations



THE PROPOSAL

The request is to form an access road down to the property from the existing track to the south. Two options were investigated by the developer consisting of a shorter route from the north, but to enable safe navigation across the terrain, the hairpin bend would need a wide turning radius on a solid footing. Furthermore the nature of the land to the north of the site consists of a valley, which restricts and limits the area available for a road. This area in particular as illustrated on diagram 5 collects storm water from the existing road above, which leads to Hooper's Rock and beyond. A significant amount of infrastructure would have to be put in place to stabilise any embankment, the road itself and to divert and manage the stormwater. Access through this area would require an excavated embankment of eight metres in height.

In order to reduce the height of the embankment to more a respectable level, the

Diagram 4: Longitudinal Cross Section

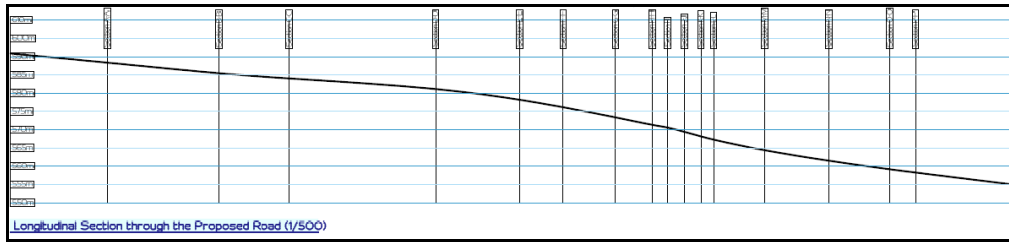
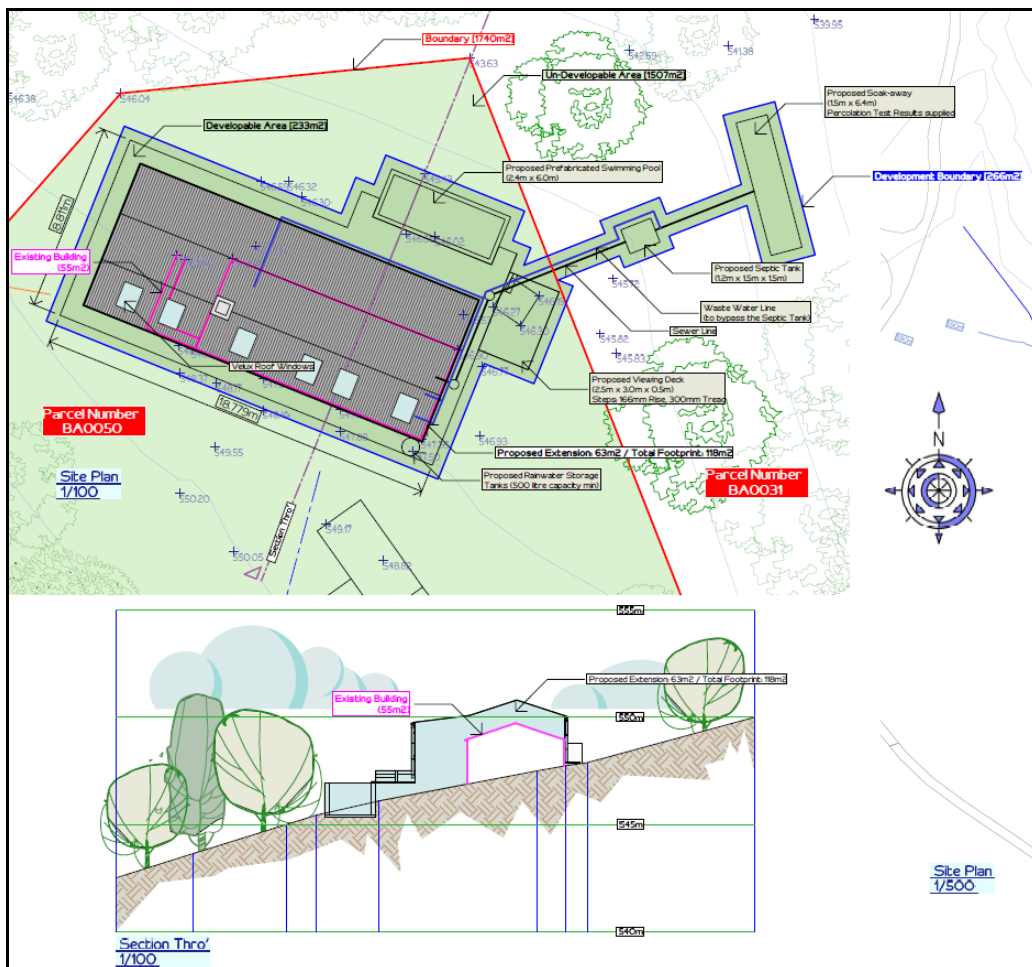


Diagram 5: Site Constraints (Area of Stormwater Flow)



Diagram 6: Site Plan and Section



Works to be undertaken to the house will consist of an extension to create two rooms on the north, north western side of the house. This will be in the form of a conservatory, comprising three bi-folding doors, and polycarbonate roof sheeting. Proposed on the west of the building adjoining the conservatory will be the sitting room, which will span the depth of the extension and existing house. A bi-fold door will be placed in this room with two Velux windows.

Further alterations to the existing building will be to raise the eaves height and maintain a similar roof pitch as the original to allow enough head height. The conservatory and front section of the sitting room will be a lean-to roof design. The material for the extension will be concrete blockwork. A further four Velux windows, one in the bathroom, kitchen and two within the bedroom will be installed in the roof space to provide the required ventilation and natural light needed.

On the western side of the existing house a small viewing platform will be constructed, and just in front of building will be a prefabricated swimming pool.

Diagram 7: Proposed Floor Layout

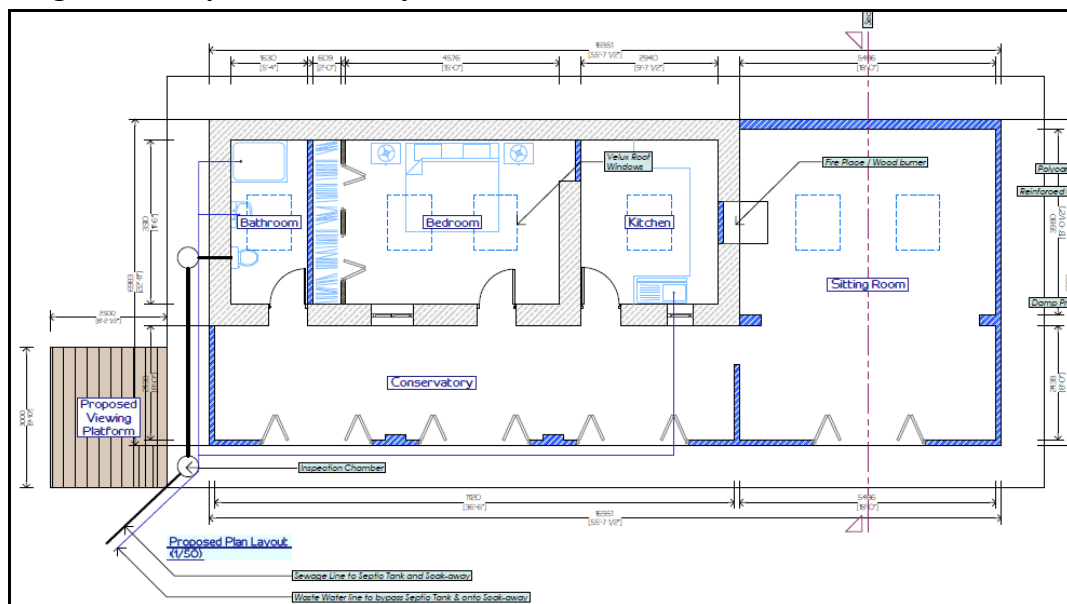
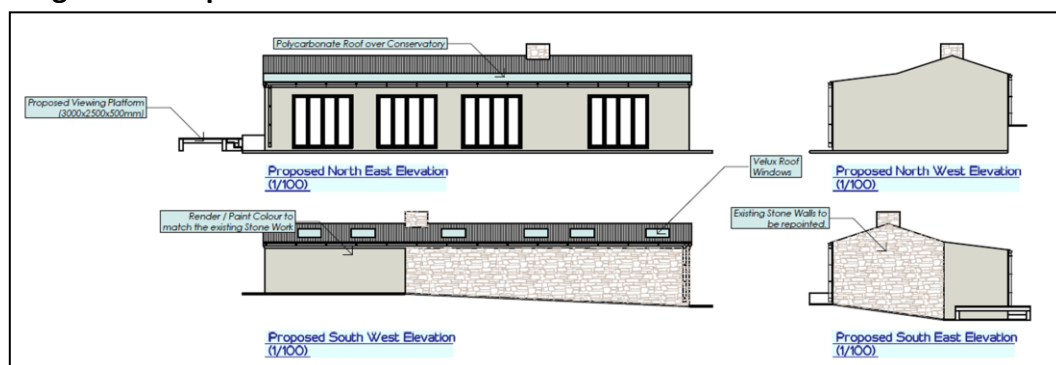


Diagram 8: Proposed Elevations



Currently there are no services to the property, where the applicant proposes to get electricity to the house by extending the overhead powerlines by 80m, and then installing the cable underground towards the house from the pole, running approximately 77m. For a water connection, the applicant proposes to connect from the existing water line above the proposed access road. In terms of sewerage, the development will have its own independent septic tank and soakaway system, which will be to the north east of the building.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

No representation was received from stakeholders, however comments was received from Heritage Society, where the following

Heritage Society – ‘It is clear there has been considerable attention to given to this application in terms of fitting into the landscape. The Ball Alley and its surroundings are particularly special.

The Heritage Society would like to make the following suggestions and would ask that this list could be modified pending a future site visit.

Proposed road:

- Concern over close proximity to Ball Alley itself.
- Existing road to Distant Cottage is a rough surface. Not clear if proposal is for tarmac/concrete or to be kept rough. Recommend new road to be rough to be in keeping with area.

Safety Rails:

- Safety Rails are proposed for corners. Urban style railing would be out of character. What is proposed?
- Should low stone wall be more in character? Is anything necessary?

House:

- The greenery around the site should continue to screen the building from view.

Officers Response – In relation to the comments made by Heritage Society, the proposed access road will be of a compacted stone base material. An unmaintained ‘rough’ track would not be suitable during inclement weather conditions. The stone compacted base is an ideal compromise in terms of the visual impact and providing sufficient traction for vehicles in all weather conditions. Safety railings has been indicated on the bends of the proposed access, given that these are areas more prone to possible accidents, it would be necessary to have some form of protection. It was clarified with the agent for the developer, that the safety rails would be crash barriers. The aesthetics of the barrier is not seen as a major concern, given that there will be limited visual impact on the landscape. It is agreed that the majority of the vegetation should remain to screen the building.

REPRESENTATION

Two representations were received from the neighbouring properties, which will be summarised below

Neighbour 1 & 2 – Both neighbours have no objection to the proposed development itself, however two concerns are raised that they consider to be brought to the attention of Planning.

- Firstly in the area there is a half inch water main line and when more than one person is using there is little to no pressure. The line would need to be upgraded if there is intended to be more users utilising this water line.
- Secondly if any damage is caused to the road/track during the construction phase of the development it should be reinstated to its former state.

Officers Response – As this development would be connecting from this water main, and will put additional strain on this system, the applicant will be required to upgrade this water main. The developer should consult with the service provider, which will be conditioned accordingly. It will be the developer's responsibility to determine whether he will bear the cost or share this amongst the neighbours. In terms of the access road, during construction any damage to any existing development or infrastructure must be reinstated, this is a standard condition and will be applied to this development permission.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

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

- Coastal Zone: Policies CZ1 & CZ.3
- 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

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

The development itself is situated within the Ball Alley area overlooking the southern coastline of the island. The topography of the land is steep with the current property situated within dense vegetation on a remote portion of land. The existing development has no services currently connected. To make the development habitable to appropriate living standards will require significant investment from the developer. Current access has been via a footpath since the property was built. In assessing the proposed access, it will have a significant visual impact on the landscape especially with the length of the road. The developer has provided a sound justification for the layout of the access, and therefore it is considered acceptable given it will not create unnecessary steep embankments like the shorter option.

Measures such as the type of surface will also mitigate the overall impact. In terms of the proposal to the building, it will retain the existing walls and windows with the extension enclosing the existing front and side elevation. The roof design will be retained with a lean-to design for the extension, however the roof will be raised to create the necessary head height, keeping the general character of the building. All the services can be provided.

Overall the development will not detract from amenity of the area within the Coastal Zone, and therefore can be supported.