

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA FEBRUARY 2022

APPLICATION	2021/40 – Retrospective Application to Retain the Installation of Photovoltaic Panels
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	11 th May 2021
APPLICANT	W A Thorpe & Sons Ltd
PARCEL	JT080021
LOCALITY	Thorpe's Wholesale Store
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown Conservation Area
CURRENT USE	Wholesale Store
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sentinel Newspaper on 13th May 2021▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	27 th May 2021
PUBLIC 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 Thorpe's Wholesale Store located within Jamestown, where it plot is designated within the Intermediate Zone and proposed Jamestown Conservation Area.

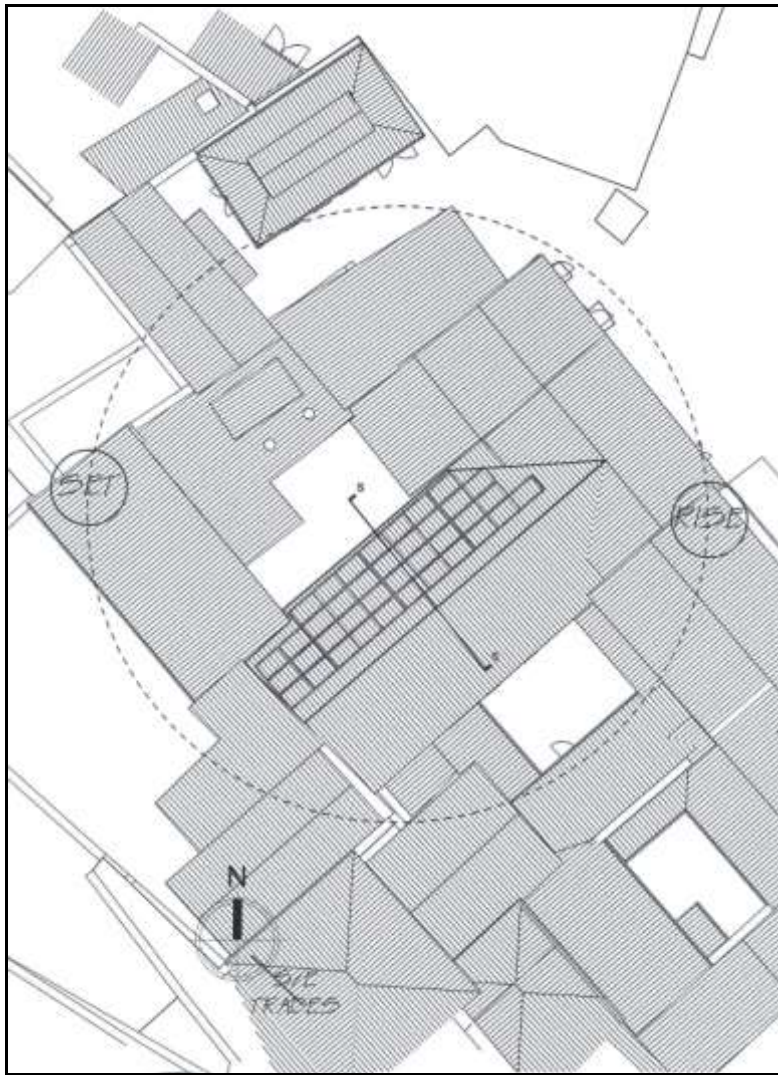
Diagram 1: Location Plan



THE PROPOSAL

The request is to retain the existing installation of photovoltaic panels on the building, There are 38 panels on the north west elevation. The rationale for the installation was to reduce the cost of running four commercial freezers, as well as to reduce their carbon footprint by utilising renewable source of energy. The North West slope was chosen, as this was the next best option compared to a northern elevation.

Diagram 2: Layout of Panels



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

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

Connect St Helena: this representation makes the 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:

'For consistency the Heritage Society recommends using the same design approach to solar panels that led to the revised application for the panels on the old cinema (2021/34). Any changes to the roof colour need to be carefully considered in relation to the LDCP roof policy for the conservation area.'

Diagram 3: Photograph of Panels



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 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 which it is situated within. 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.

Although the current arrangement of panels is not a poor design, this could still be improved upon. It would be advisable to reduce the number of panels to form a rectangular design, but the rationale from the applicant is that this specific number of

panels are required to achieve the necessary cost savings. In terms of the effect on the setting of the conservation area, the panels cannot be seen from the Market Street and is not readily visible. The painting of the roof colour to grey would be inconsistent with the roof colour policy. In conclusion, based upon the design and the LDCA's previous decisions on staggered panels along the hip, this application can be supported.