

## Planning Officer's Report - LDCA April 2022

<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>2022/09</b> – Proposed Four Bedroom Dwelling and Office/Garage
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Full Permission
<b>REGISTERED</b>	22 February 2022
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Alex Adams
<b>PARCEL</b>	NG0194
<b>SIZE</b>	0.21 acres
<b>LOCALITY</b>	Cleughs Plain
<b>LAND OWNER</b>	Alex Adams
<b>ZONE</b>	Intermediate Zone
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	None
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Excavated Vacant Site
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sentinel Newspaper on 24 February 2022</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	10 March 2022
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	None Received
<b>DECISION ROUTE</b>	<del>Delegated</del> / 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 (Comments)
5. Property Division	No Response
6. Environmental Management	No Objection (Comments)
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: P Scipio*

*Authorised by: S Williams (Ag CPO)*

*Application 2022/09*

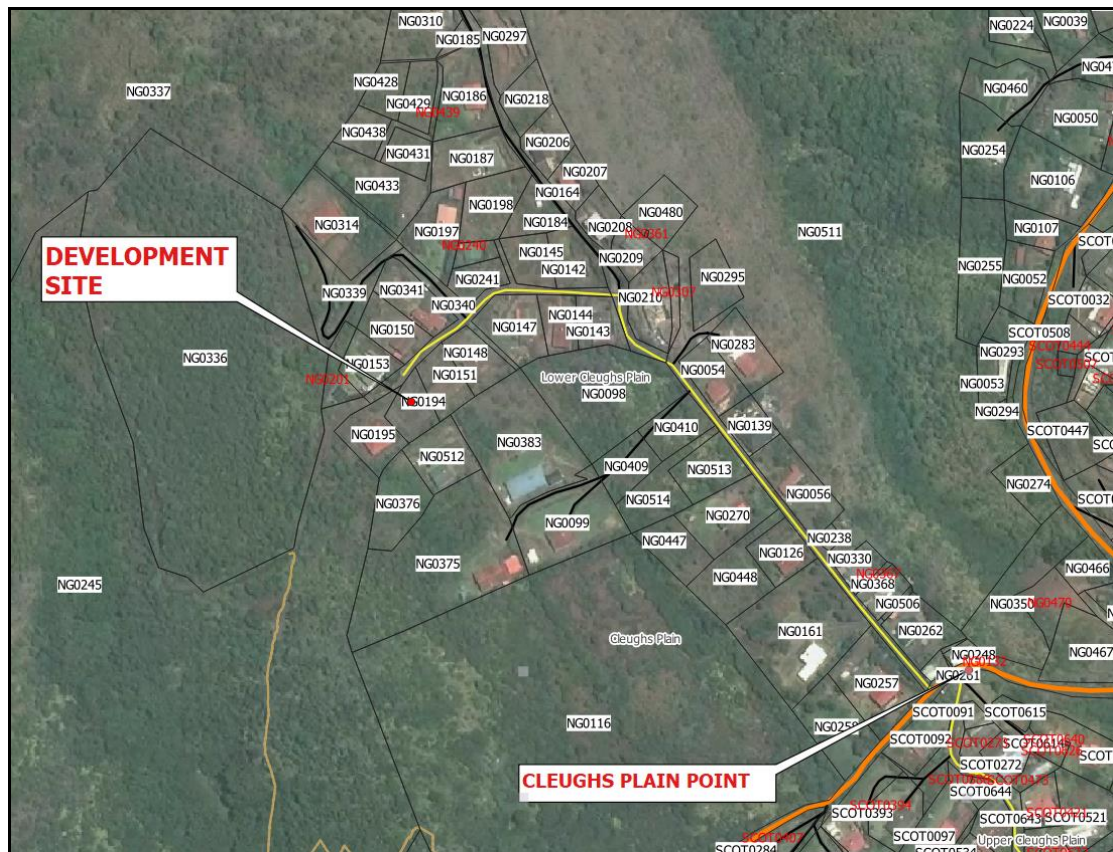
11. Sustainable Development	No Response
12. National Trust	No Objection
13. Sure SA Ltd	No Objection
14. Heritage Society	No Response

## B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

### LOCALITY & ZONING

The proposed development site is located at Lower Cleughs Plain within the Intermediate Zone where relevant IZ1 policies apply such as serviceability and impact on neighbouring amenity. There are no Conservation Area restrictions.

**Diagram 1: Location Plan**



### BACKGROUND AND PLANNING HISTORY

The site had been excavated previously however, there are no records on file of an application or subsequent approval ever been given for the excavation. An application 2018/21 for a proposed 3 bedroom house on that existing excavated site was reported on and presented to LDCA in June 2019 but was later withdrawn without receiving a decision from the LDCA after request were made to the applicant for further details on the proposed retaining structure for the existing embankment.

This application is from a new owner of this excavated land.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

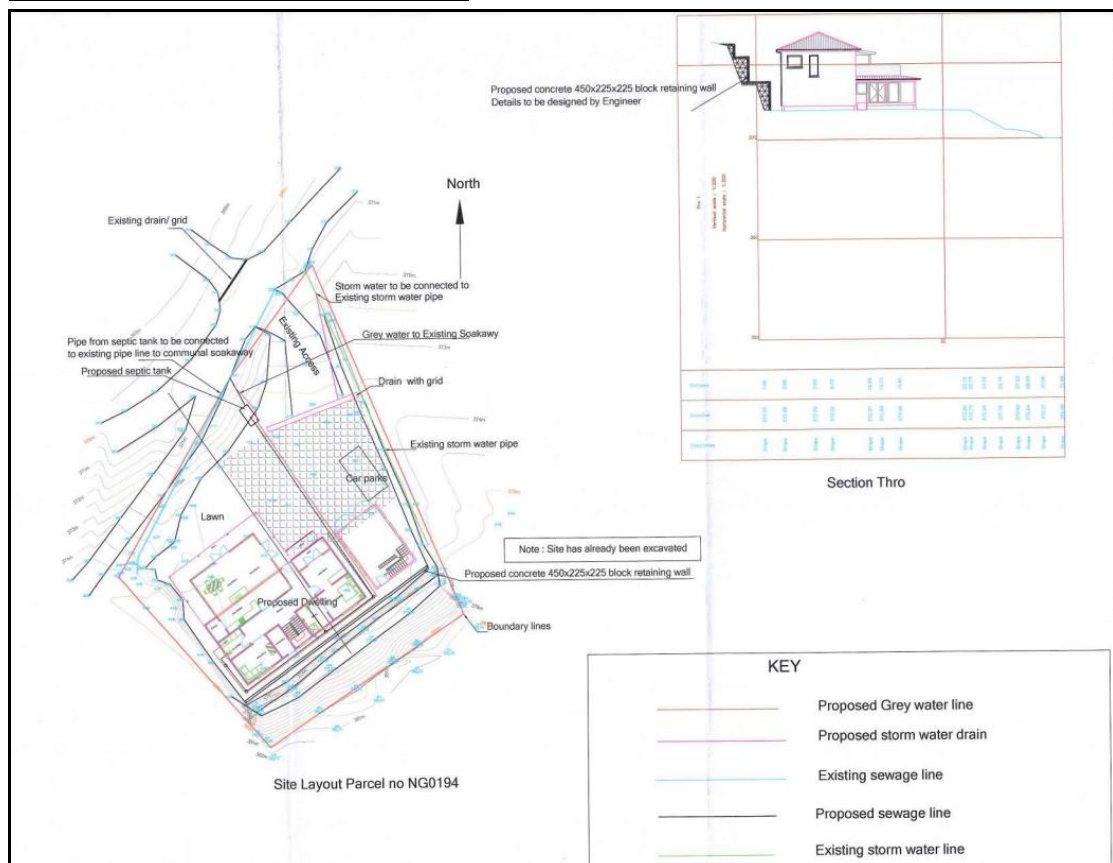
The site which was excavated previously sits between and below other residential properties which has been developed and occupied. The existing excavated terraced embankment is over 6 metres high and has eroded over time since excavation thus leaving loose stone and soil exposed. As it stands the embankment is not safe and will require retaining before other development occurs.

The applicant has proposed a concrete block retaining wall as shown on the site section plan below, structural details of the wall will need to be designed, submitted and approved by building control before construction. In the pre-application meeting it was made clear to the applicant that subject to planning approval no development can commence until the retaining wall is put in place, this will also be conditioned.

Access to the site is in the form of an existing vehicle access road leading off the main residential access road to the north of the site.

A septic tank is proposed for the development that will be connected to the existing communal soakaway to the north of the site.

**Diagram 2: Site Plan & Site Section**



**Diagram 3: Image of Existing Excavated Site**



**HOUSE, OFFICE & GARAGE:** Both the house and office/garage buildings are constructed as timber frame structures with external timber cladding. The applicant is proposing to use timber for the exterior cladding that will weather over time to blend with the surrounding landscape.

Roof will be constructed from dark grey metal sheeting.

While the buildings are both two storey the roof ridgeline will be hidden by the existing excavated embankment to the rear, thus minimizing the visual impact on neighbours to the south of the development.

The interior design of the house provides an integral ground floor living accommodation that can be occupied in separation from the rest of the house. The remaining ground floor provides a main living area that is open plan with large windows allowing as much natural light as possible. There is also a dedicated plant room designed to accommodate batteries and invertors for the solar system and water filtration equipment proposed with this development application.

The first floor is basic design consisting of 3 bedrooms, a study and bathroom. Both floors have outside seating areas in the form of a wraparound veranda on the ground floor and a sun deck on the first floor.

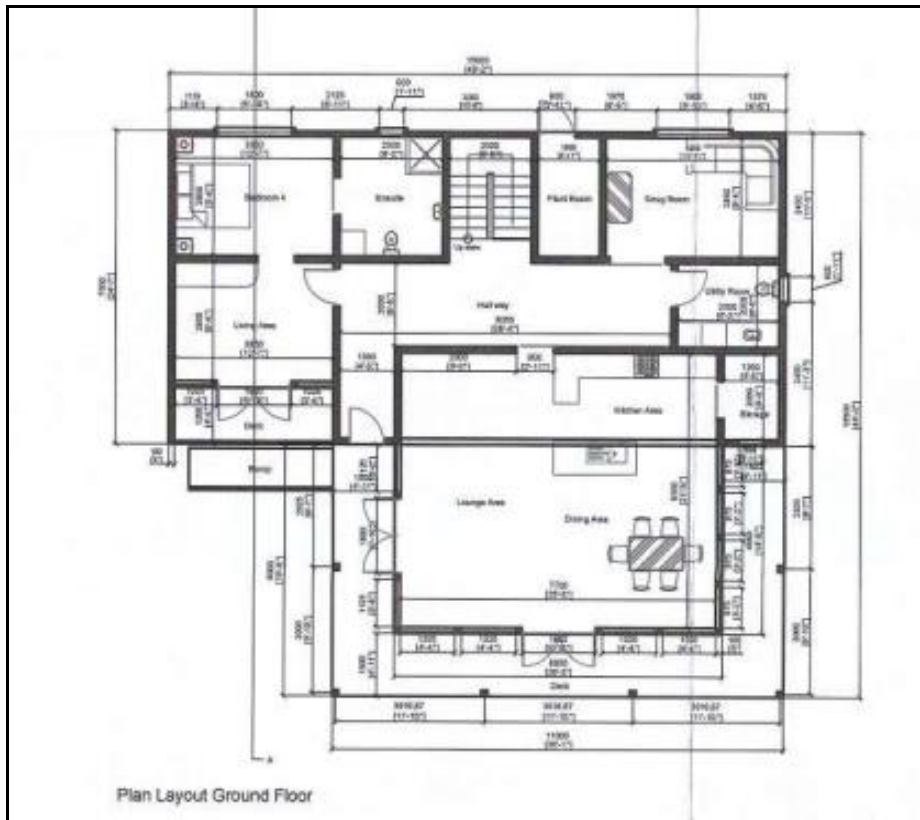
The office and garage building is designed to fit in with the overall aesthetics of the property and are basically open floor areas with an access stairs.

The applicant aims to minimise the impact on existing water and electricity supplies by proposing to harvest rainwater into storage tanks, filtered and reused throughout the house. Photovoltaic panels are proposed to be installed on the roof structure in

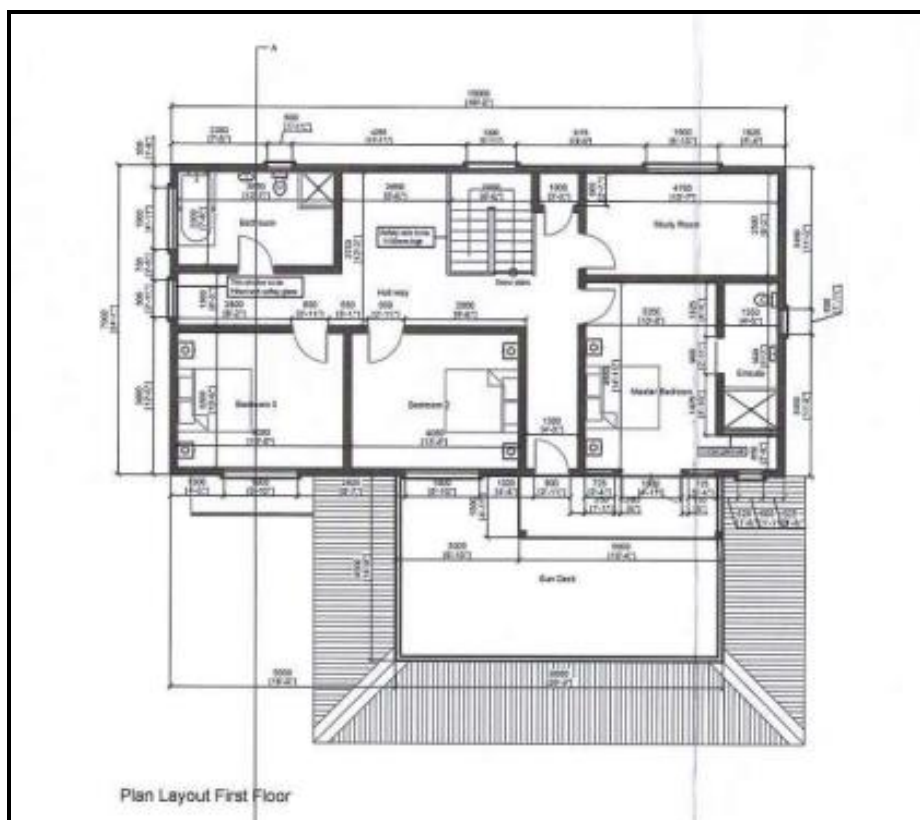


conjunction with batteries and inverters to provide the electricity requirements to the property with a view to minimise the load on the grid.

**Diagram 4: House Plan (Ground Floor)**



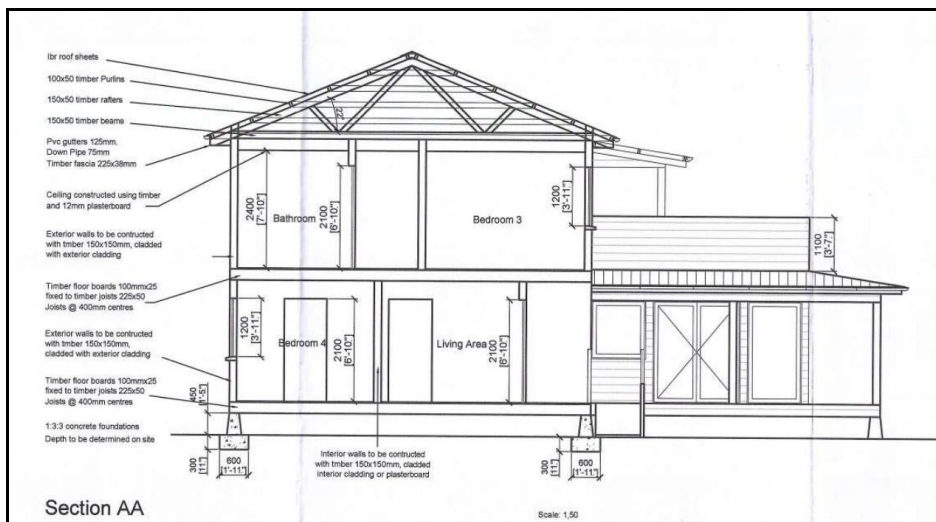
**Diagram 5: House Plan (First Floor)**



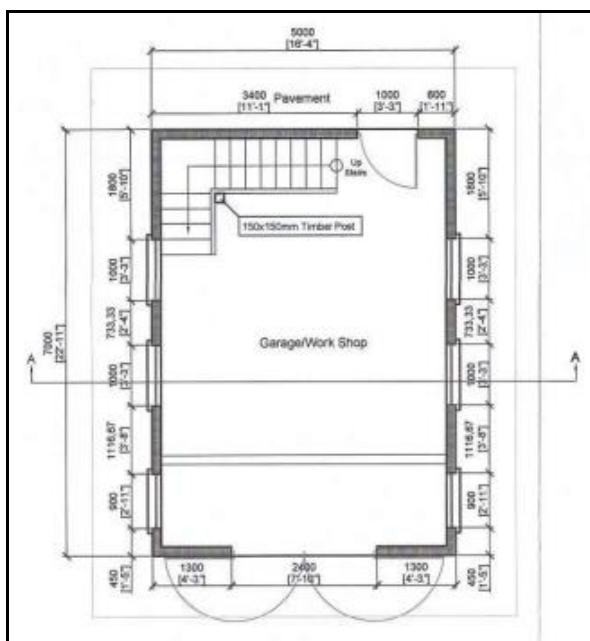
**Diagram 6: House Elevations**



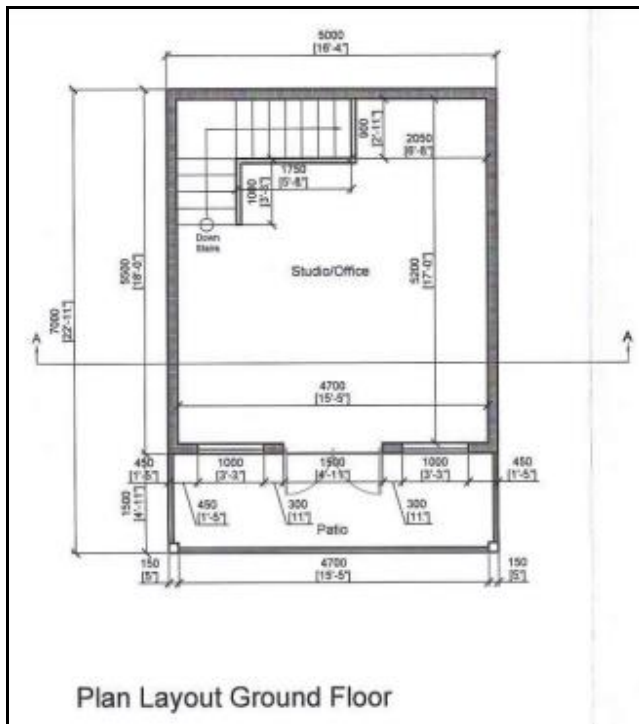
**Diagram 7: House Section**



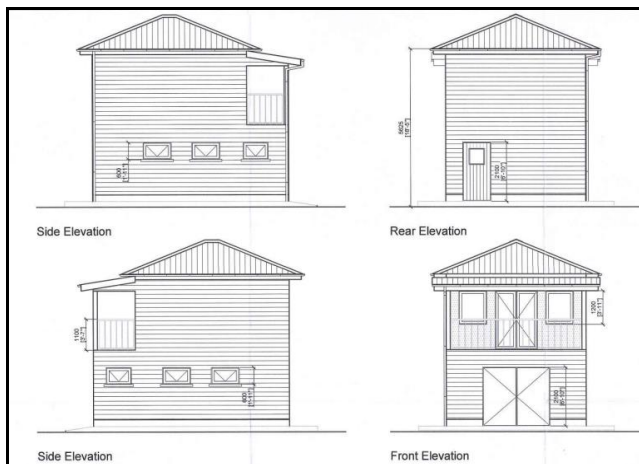
**Diagram 8: Garage Plan (Ground Floor)**



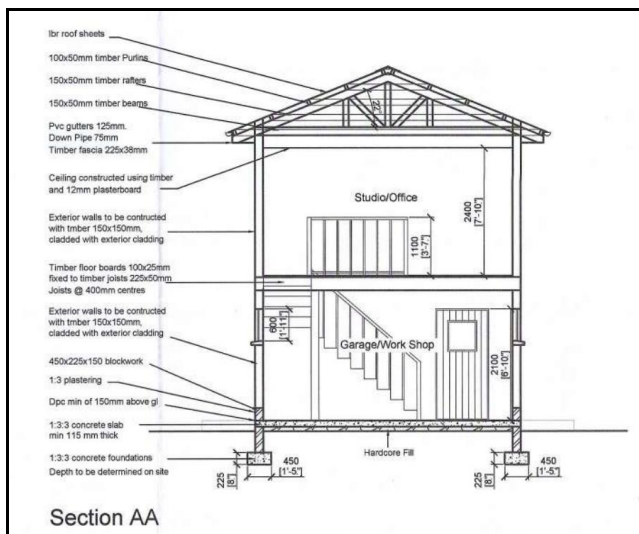
**Diagram 9: Office Plan (First Floor)**



**Diagram 10: Office/Garage Elevations**



**Diagram 11: Office/Garage Section**



**Diagram 12: Artistic Impression of the Property**



## REPRESENTATIONS

No representations were received from any statutory body or members of the public, including immediate neighbours. However, the following comments were made by three consultees:

**Connect St Helena (Energy):** "Connect makes no observation as to the development request which is a decision for planning but 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. Connect can offer assistance and advice to the developer if requested as to any potential technical or safety issues."

**EMD:** "Good to see the applicant has considered environmental impacts and has integrated energy and water saving initiatives into the design. Noted that there are plans to plant endemics on the property as part of the overall landscaping, this is supported but will need to be done under advice from EMD as to which species would be most appropriate."

**Roads Section:** "Applicant is to be fully responsible for any storm water flowing from the existing public road onto the property and should bear the cost of installing drains as appropriate."



## LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The relevant policies of the Land Development Control Plan (LDCP 2012 - 2022) that are applicable in the assessment of the proposed development are set out below:

- Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1 (a, b, f, g and h)
- 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'S ASSESSMENT

It is clear from the details above that this proposed two storey, timber framed and timber cladded development differs from surrounding properties with regard to scale and external materials. The properties in close proximity are mostly single story bungalows constructed from concrete blockwork and rendered with a cement and sand plaster.

The intermediate zone policy IZ1 (a) states that *"the siting, **scale**, layout, **proportion**, details and **external materials** in any development, including individual dwellings, **form a coherent** whole both in the development itself and **in relation to surrounding development**,"*

In considering the bold underlined sections of the above policy it is unlikely that this development could be considered for approval, however, there are many other factors to consider.

Firstly in relation to scale and proportion, it is becoming ever more difficult to identify and purchase land in existing residential areas, therefore multi-storey construction allows for a greater floor area of habitable space while reducing the footprint on the land, thus making best use of the land, which is supported by policy IZ1 (e) *"**the design and layout demonstrate optimum use of developable land**."*

It is also worth noting that while not in close proximity, there are existing two storey houses in the lower Cleughs Plain area and in viewing distance of the proposed development.

With regard to the external timber cladding materials, the development does form a *"**coherence within the development itself**"* with the house in relation to the office and garage. However, while the external materials are different to surrounding developments, timber frame and cladding is a form of construction that has been around since the beginning of construction and is now used more so because of its many benefits, for example;

**Natural material for ecology and sustainability:** Timber is considered to be more eco-friendly than traditional block/brick built houses in that it comes from a natural source, is non-toxic and doesn't cause damage to the environment. Timber is made

from carbon drawn from the atmosphere. This carbon would otherwise be adding to the greenhouse effect. Using timber in buildings stores the carbon for as long as the building stands or the timber is used.

**Offers great insulation:** Timber is a natural insulator and can help reduce energy needs. A timber frame house allows more space for insulation than a brick building, and wood itself also has naturally thermally insulating properties. Of course, a better insulated home requires less energy to heat and cool, which typically means less fossil fuel use.

Wood also has better insulating properties than steel which limit its ability to conduct heat and help to minimise the energy needed for heating and cooling thus providing very energy efficient homes. Timber houses are considered to be 44% more thermally efficient.

Additional benefits of timber construction is its durability and easy maintenance, it allows for a variety of design and size options and its quick construction times.

The design features of this proposed development demonstrates the applicant's consideration for the environment, both from the construction methods and the proposal for energy and water saving initiatives.

Therefore, while this proposed timber framed house will stand alone with regard to its external materials in relation to surrounding properties, it does not create any negative impact on them. IZ H9 b) ***"the development shall not be materially damaging to the amenity of existing development."***

Overall the design and material will not only enhance the area, it will also create an example of the many benefits derived from timber construction compared to block or brick.

Its compliance with other IZ policies as outlined above creates a proposal that can be supported.