

## Planning Officer's Report - LDCA JULY 2022

<b>APPLICATION</b>	2022/31 – Proposed partial change of use Bar/restaurant to Place of Worship
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Full Permission
<b>REGISTERED</b>	09 June 2022
<b>APPLICANT</b>	The Rock Christian Fellowship
<b>PARCEL</b>	LWS0315
<b>LOCALITY</b>	Nr Longwood Gate, Longwood
<b>LAND OWNER</b>	Derek Pedley (Liquidator)
<b>ZONE</b>	Intermediate Zone
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	Longwood House
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	House, Bar and Restaurant (Currently Unused)
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Independent Newspaper on 10 June 2022</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	24 June 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
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	No Objection
11. Sustainable Development	No Response

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|----------------------|--------------|
| 12. National Trust   | No Response  |
| 13. Sure SA Ltd      | No Objection |
| 14. Heritage Society | No Response  |

**B. PLANNING OFFICER’S APPRAISAL**

**LOCALITY & ZONING**

The site for the proposed change of use is located near Longwood Gate, within the Intermediate Zone where relevant IZ1 policies apply such as serviceability and impact on neighbouring amenity. It is also in the Historic National Conservation Area (NCA) because of its association with Longwood House where relevant Built Heritage policies apply.

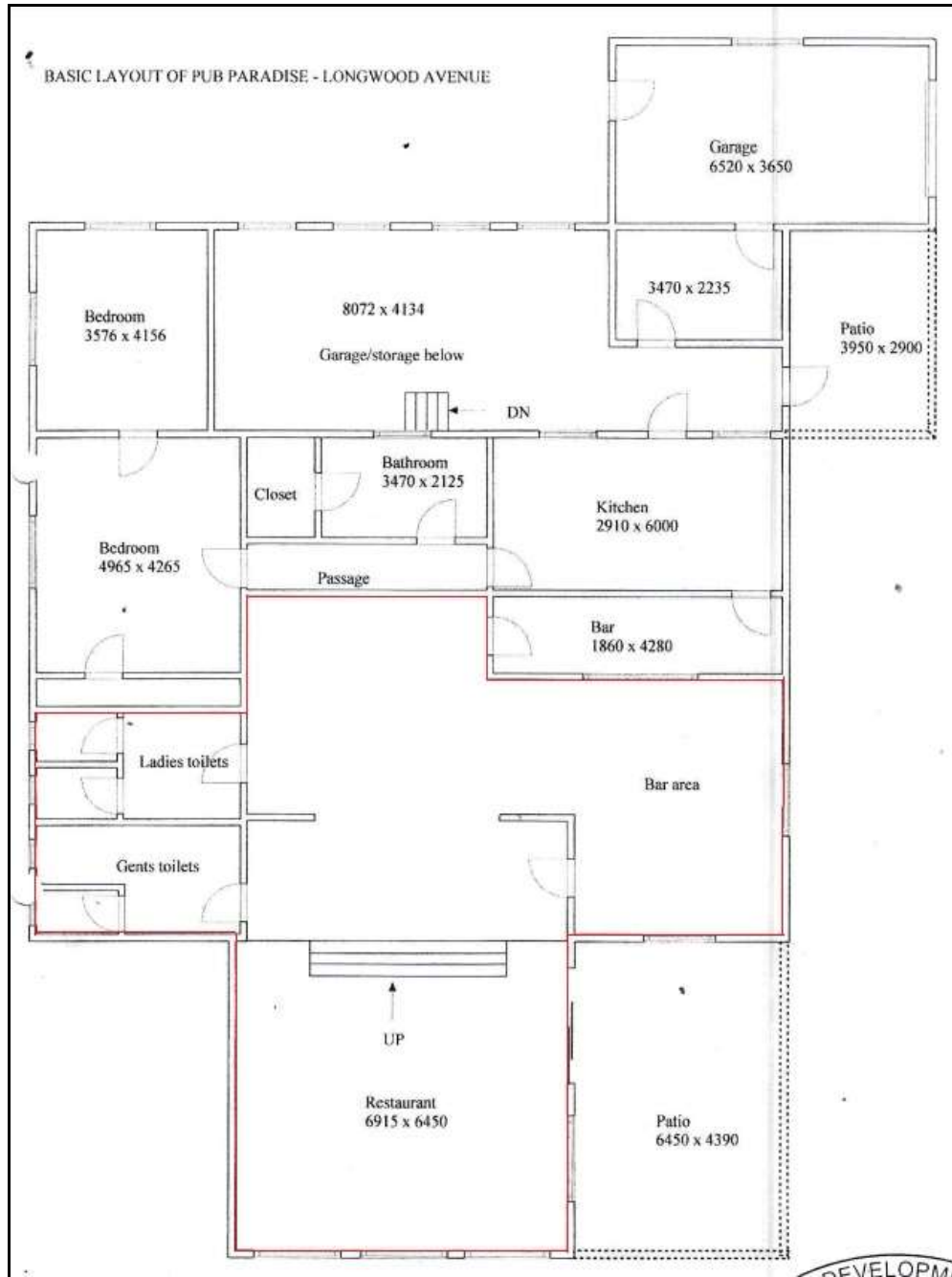
**Diagram 1: Location Plan**



**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposal is to convert the existing bar and restaurant areas into a congregation worship area for the “Rock Christian Fellowship Church.” No alterations are proposed for the existing internal or external structures.

**Diagram 2: Plan**



**REPRESENTATIONS**

One representation was received from a member of the public.

**Public Representation** – We seek to oppose and take leadership to represent the voice of the most affected people, the community of Longwood. We therefore ask that before any change of use is considered, the adverse facts are also measured so as to make the right decision in regards to acting in the best interest of our people and the island of St Helena. The application itself does not oppose the beliefs of any person who freely wishes to worship, nor does it oppose any religion. It merely states

reasons for opposition of an irreplaceable prime spot within Longwood that has been the heart and soul of Longwood for several decades. We therefore strongly oppose on the following conditions as stated below:-

- a) There is no pub/restaurant facilities operational in Longwood
- b) Prime Landmark that has been a Bar and eatery for over 30 years.
- c) It totally goes against the St Helena Governments New Strategy 2022 - 2025 and their VISION as published in the St Helena independent on 27 May 2022.
- d) It goes against the Government of St Helena's obligation to ensure the social needs of the people are addressed.
- e) Longwood has already seen an increase in serious crime that could very well be contributed to the effects of no social life.
- f) It goes against the future of St Helena in rebuilding for tourism.
- g) It will cause widespread political damage

Priority has gone to addressing the needs of our people, and we hope that such criteria as stated above should be well sufficient to evaluate the damaging effects placed on the community.

**Officer's comments:**

The concerns expressed by the representation are relevant to the community of Longwood and addresses the lack of facilities (pub/restaurant) that cater for the social life of the community.

However, the property has been on the market for sale for many months and not been brought back into operation as a bar and restaurant. As a result the building and surroundings have been neglected and could deteriorate over time. Bringing the building back into use will allow the new owners/users to carry out regular maintenance.

**LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The proposed development was assessed against the LDCP Built Heritage Policy BH1 (a & c) where permission can be granted if the character of the area is enhanced and protected, and the Intermediate Zone Policy (IZ1) supports social and cultural development.

## **OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT**

No alterations are proposed for the existing internal or external structures and the development would not therefore be harmful to the character or amenity of the area. The policy also supports social and cultural development (which includes Places of Worship) and there would be no harm to the conservation area. Whilst it is accepted the loss of the only pub/restaurant in Longwood could impact some members of the local community, bringing the disused building back into use as a Place of Worship would comply with the above policies and can therefore be supported.