

Planning Officer's Report - LDCA 19 DECEMBER 2022

APPLICATION	2022/83 – Proposed Balcony and Verandah
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	10 November 2022
APPLICANT	Iryna Moloshniak
PARCEL	JT010021
LOCALITY	The Yacht Club, The Wharf, Jamestown
LAND OWNER	Crown
ZONE	Intermediate Zone
CONSERVATION AREA	Heritage Coast
CURRENT USE	Yacht Club
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Independent Newspaper on 11 November 2022▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	25 November 2022
REPRESENTATIONS	Two Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / 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 (Comments)
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
11. Sustainable Development	No Response
12. National Trust	No Response

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| 13. Sure SA Ltd | No Objection (Comments) |
| 14. Heritage Society | No Response |
| 15. Port Control | No Objection (Comments) |

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

The proposed development site is located at the Yacht Club on the Wharf, Jamestown. The area is within the Heritage Coast Conservation Area and the Intermediate Zone. The Yacht Club Building is Grade 2 Listed.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal has two elements, firstly the installation of a replica of the former small balcony outside the first-floor central doorway, secondly construction of a free-standing larger balcony / verandah, accessed from the smaller balcony.

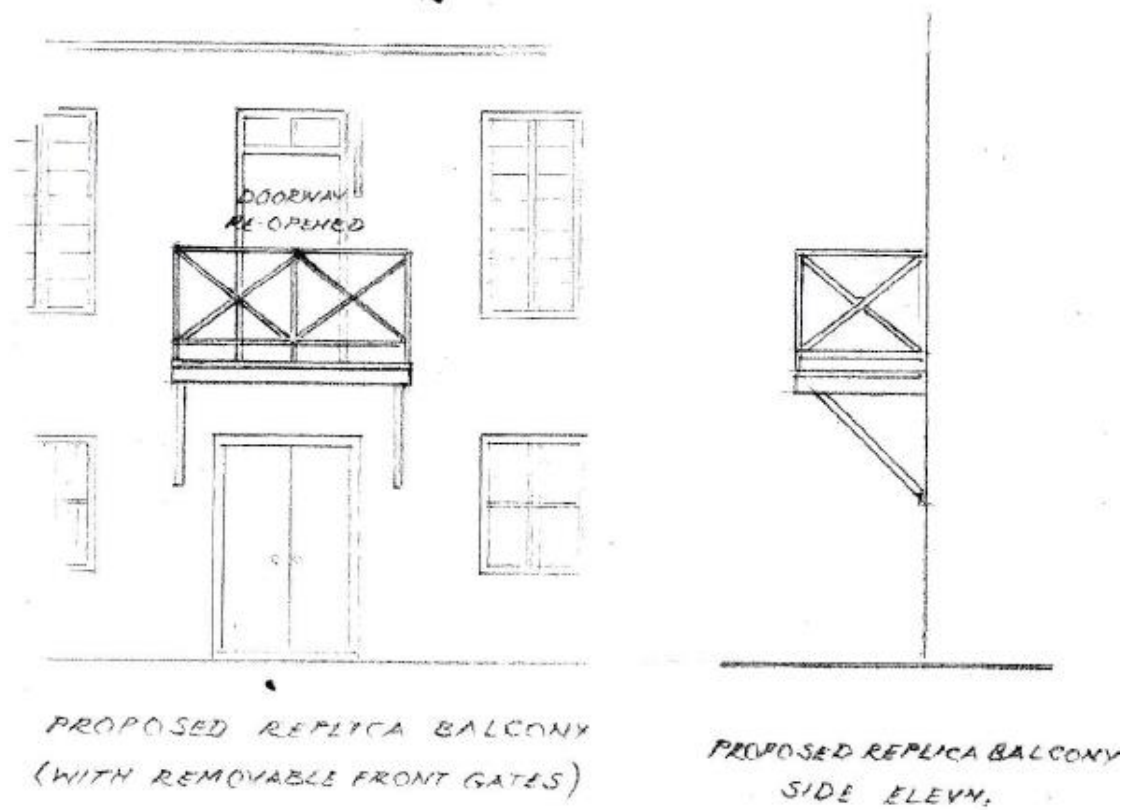
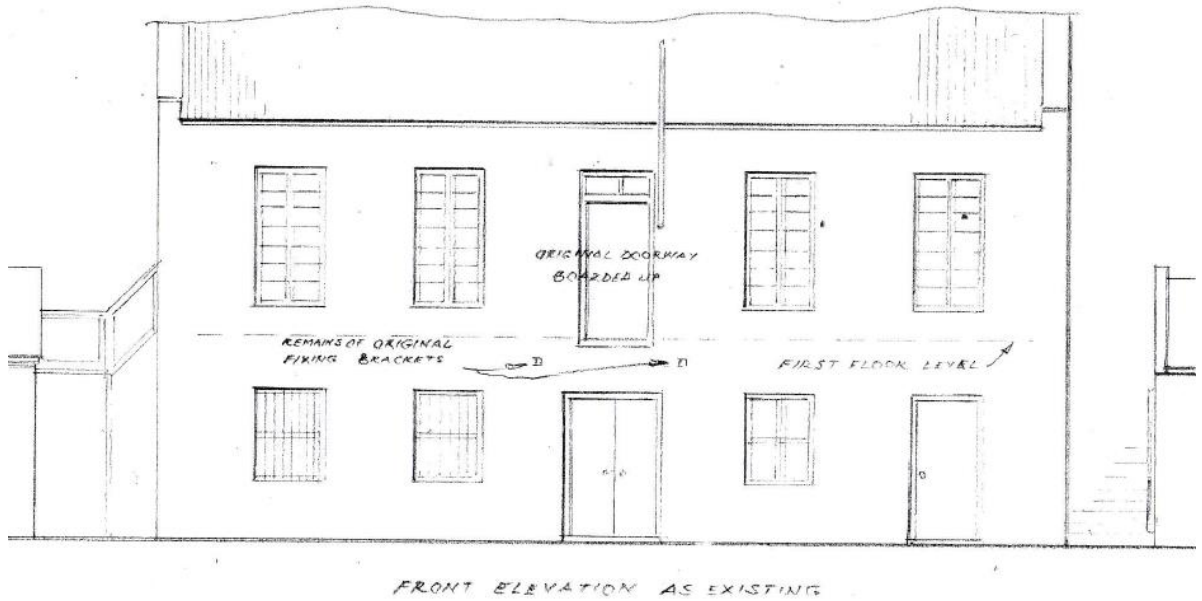
The applicant has indicated the original balcony (approximately 0.9m x 1.8m (3ft x 6ft)), seems to have disappeared in the 1970s. Brackets attaching it to the front wall are still in place and photographs from 1911 and earlier suggest it was a simple timber structure with wrought iron handrails and criss-cross balustrades. The replica is proposed to be made in the same way and to the same details. The original central doorway to the balcony is still there boarded-in.

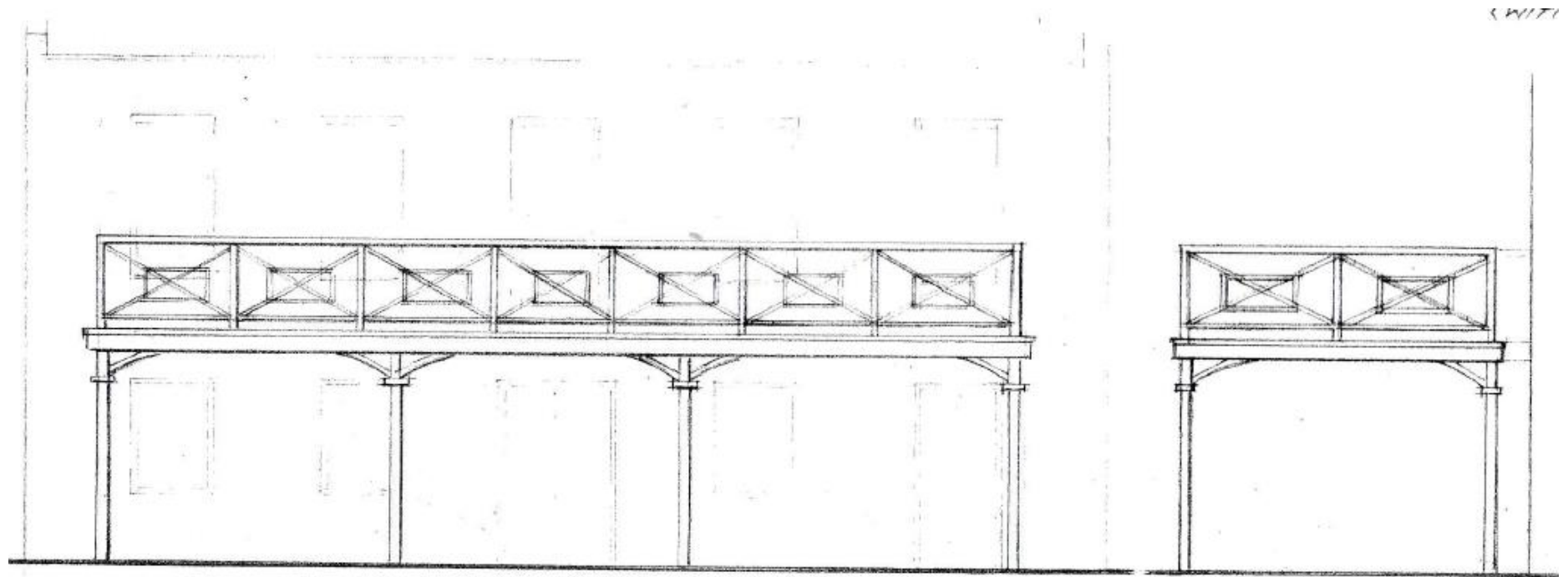
The proposed free-standing balcony/verandah has a floor area of 3.8m x 11.0m (12.6ft x 36ft). The underside of the platform will be 2.5m (8.3ft) above ground level allowing unobstructed use of the existing pedestrian area. The structure will stand 0.45m (18") clear of the Yacht Club building. It will not be attached to the building and instead bolted to the ground, to avoid interference with the listed building. It would also allow the structure to be removed without affecting the building if necessary.

The intention is to provide first floor outdoor catering space and protection to the ground floor area below it, in use for the same purpose. It will be constructed of timber, with traditional details including criss-cross balustrades reflecting St Helena tradition, and will stand clear of the wharf road carriageway, behind the line of existing concrete bollards.

The applicant hopes and intends the development to be the first tangible expression of the gradual transition of the Wharf to leisure related activities alongside traditional boat building and repairing, as container handling moves away to Rupert's

Diagram 2: Elevations





PROPOSED FREE-STANDING VERANDAH
FRONT ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION

REPRESENTATIONS

Two representations were received from members of the public. No objections were received from any statutory body, however the following comments were received:

ROADS SECTION:

“As this is not a public highway, please consult with the Harbour master as this section is use for the Terex Forklift to bring Shipping containers up from the lower wharf to the customs area.”

PORT CONTROL:

“Port Control have reviewed all relevant documentation, including all HSE aspects of this installation and can find no objection to the proposal of the balcony and Verandah outside of the yacht club.”

SURE SOUTH ATLANTIC LTD:

“Please be aware of underground telecoms cable in the pedestrian area. If you require clarification of location of cable before bolting structure to the ground, please contact Sure South Atlantic Ltd.”

REPRESENTATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC (1):

“World Context

The applicant’s statement refers to the Yacht Club as an “oddly proportioned” building with tall first floor windows and central doorway.

This type of building relates directly to a row of East India Company warehouses on the banks of the Pearl River in Canton in 1770s China but burnt down in 1822.

A row of single-storey buildings at the Wharf in Jamestown which includes the Yacht Club was recorded in the 1780s. The row was frequently modified to two storeys or back to one, but little has changed in the last hundred years and they continue to retain their East India Company character. As such they are the last surviving physical remnants of any East India Company port of the Age of Sail and in particular of the company’s great Tea-Trade monopoly.

The East India Company settled St Helena in 1659 as a vital component in its Indian Ocean trading system. Two thirds of its ships called here until its trade monopoly ceased in 1834. The Wharf buildings are a physical reminder of the islands key role in developing world trade and an Empire.

The other major East India Company ports of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta have all expanded to obliterate their original port facilities. In London the East India Company docks at Deptford and Blackwall were finally built over in the 1990s.

This leaves just the Wharf at Jamestown including the Yacht Club as the sole surviving physical evidence of the world-changing centuries of East India Company trade and St Helena's key role in it. The buildings on the Wharf are therefore of international significance.

This is part of the context by which this application should be considered because it will affect the already protected setting of this group of listed buildings within the Historic Conservation Area.

The Proposal

Whether this proposal is described as a freestanding structure or an extension, it will nevertheless obstruct the view of the Yacht Club front elevation. Verandas are intended to enhance the appearance of a building but this structure is of such large scale it will overwhelm it. The Yacht Club is also part of a row of buildings intimately related by design, scale, proportion, usage and history. The proposed structure will interfere with that relationship.

If this application is permitted it is likely that other similar structures would be permitted along the historic wharf. This would have the effect of changing the character and setting of the historic asset of the Conservation Area.

The application says the proposal will lead the "transition of the Wharf to leisure related activities". Any such large scale change in the appearance or character of these buildings should be part of a publicly agreed strategy. Currently there is no such strategy, only the existing LDCP.

It is questionable whether the proposal meets the criteria for it to be permitted under LDCP policy BH1c."

REPRESENTATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC 2:

"This development application to reinstate the small balcony at the St Helena Yacht Club and add a freestanding verandah and larger balcony is to be welcomed. It has been designed to complement the listed building it is adjacent to and its setting. The verandah is well proportioned and the style is thoughtfully developed. It is the first development within the present cargo handling area on Jamestown wharf which is being developed to provide the tourism and leisure facilities planned for this area when cargo handling is transferred to Rupert's wharf. The quality of the development will hopefully set a precedent for the standard of subsequent alterations to, and conversions of, the few remaining historic seafront buildings and the redevelopment of other buildings which have been inappropriately converted or allowed to

disintegrate over the years. This development application enhances an important historic area which is also a prime development area in the context of improving the leisure choice for residents and the Island's offering for tourists.

The development of the Yacht Club building offers the opportunity to provide:-

- 1. A place where people can have coffee or a light meal when other catering outlets which cater for the Jamestown lunchtime trade or weekend entertainment are closed*
- 2. A much improved social venue for yacht crews, divers and people who enjoy other marine activities*
- 3. A much needed facility for residents as well as for tourists where diving and other marine pursuits are becoming established as the main tourism attraction/activity*
- 4. A more attractive focal point for the Cape Town to St Helena Yacht Race, the World ARC Rally and the Oyster Rally where the visiting yacht crews can gather*
- 5. An important addition to the facilities available for all visiting yacht crews; a segment of the tourist market which is recognised as requiring improved facilities*
- 6. A place to relax and socialise at a prime site in James Bay”*

OFFICER RESPONSE

A condition has been included requiring the applicant to consult with Sure prior to constructing the freestanding balcony to mitigate the potential risk to underground telecoms cables. Some of the key elements raised by members of the public are considered in the Officers Assessment below.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

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

- Built Heritage Policy: BH1, BH2
- Intermediate Zone Policy: IZ1 (a)(b)(d)(g)
- Tourism Policy: T1

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

The proposal has 2 main elements, a replica of the former small balcony on the first floor and a free-standing larger balcony / verandah accessed from the smaller balcony.

The Yacht Club is a Grade 2 listed building in a conservation area. Built Heritage Policies therefore apply. LDCP Policy BH1a indicates that development which encourages, supports and includes conservation of historic structures (e.g. listed

buildings) and their setting will be permitted with appropriate requirements. Policy BH1c indicates development in conservation areas will be permitted if it enhances and protects the character of the area by reference to scale, proportion, details and external materials.

The only element of the proposal that will be attached to the structure of the listed building is a replica of the original small balcony that is thought to have existed around a hundred years ago but has been lost some time since. This element of the proposal enhances the character of the historic conservation area, and the listed building and its setting. This is considered to be a significant benefit in favour of the proposal.

The free-standing platform has been designed taking into account St Helena tradition being constructed of timber with criss-cross balustrades. The front elevation shows the new structure is narrower than the Yacht Club building itself and is considered to be in scale and proportion with the building in this respect.

The platform will extend about 4.25m from the front of the Yacht Club building. When considered in the wider context of the wharf, the platform would extend out over the wharf beyond the line of the surrounding buildings. The platform itself would be of a similar height to the eaves of the surrounding buildings and the railings would be higher. However, the proposal is essentially a lightweight timber structure of low mass compared to the surrounding stone buildings. Taking this into account, the scale of the proposal is considered to be appropriate in the context of the setting of the listed buildings and the character of the conservation area.

The Intermediate Zone policy and Tourism policy supports tourism-related development of this nature. Port Control have also confirmed they have no objection to the proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies in the LDCP and can therefore be supported.