

## Planning Officer's Report - LDCA APRIL 2025

<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>2025/07</b> – Creation of Garden Grounds by Excavation and Extending a Terrace
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Full Permission
<b>REGISTERED</b>	6 February 2025
<b>APPLICANT</b>	W.A. Thorpe & Sons Ltd
<b>PARCEL</b>	FP0238
<b>LOCALITY</b>	Woodcot, Alarm Forest
<b>ZONE</b>	Green Heartland
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	None
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Vacant Garden Land on Property
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The Sentinel Newspaper on 7 February 2025.</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	21 February 2025
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	None
<b>DECISION ROUTE</b>	<del>Delegated</del> / <b>LDCA</b> / <del>EXCO</del>

### A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Sewage & Water Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Objection
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection
4. Roads Section	No Response
5. Property Division	No Response
6. Environmental Management	No Response
7. Environmental Health	No Objection
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. St Helena Police Services	No Objection
10. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	No Objection
11. Economic Development	No Objection
12. National Trust	No Response
13. Sure SA Ltd	No Objection
14. Heritage Society	No Objection
15. Maritime	Not Applicable

## B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

### LOCALITY & ZONING

This plot is located within the grounds of Woodcot, situated in the district of Alarm Forest, where it is designated within the Green Heartland Zone and has no conservation area restrictions.

**Diagram 1: Location Plan**



## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Applicant is proposing to excavate approximately 682m<sup>2</sup> of their privately owned land that is currently a sloped hillside, to establish *flat* garden grounds for cultivation, to the south of Woodcot Cottage. This ground was previously attempted as garden grounds, but failed due to the sloped surface that caused water run-off and therefore an unsuccessful cultivation effort.

The proposed development work seeks to enhance the usability and productivity of this piece of land, with a focus on promoting sustainable food production and supporting local food security.

The key benefits of this proposal are as follows:

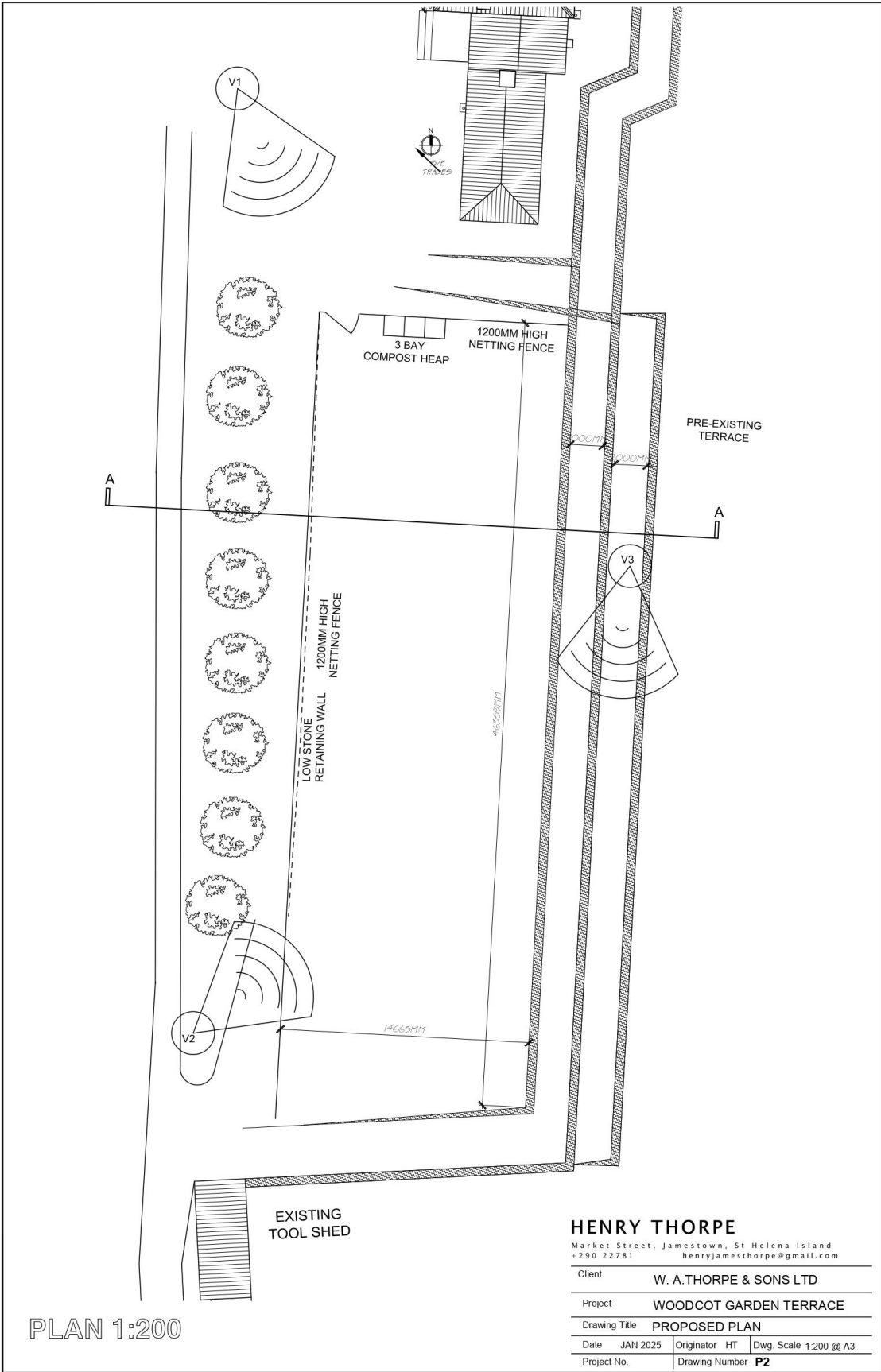
**Improved Water Retention and Cultivation;** transforming the slope into flat ground will significantly improve water retention, reducing runoff and erosion. Flat land is far more suitable for vegetable cultivation, as it allows consistent irrigation and better soil stability, ensuring the crops have the moisture and nutrients required for optimal growth.

**Use of Agricultural Tools;** a flat surface will enable the use of a rotivator, which is essential for efficient soil preparation and maintenance. This will reduce the labour required and improve the quality of soil cultivation, promoting healthy crop yields.

**Contribution to Household and Community Food Security;** the primary purpose of the garden will be to supply fresh vegetables for household use. Any surplus produce from this smallholding will be sold locally, contributing to the availability of locally-grown, fresh produce on the island. This aligns with broader efforts to enhance food security, reduce reliance on imported goods, and support the local economy.

**Sustainable Land Use;** this project represents an opportunity to make productive use of currently underutilised land, turning it into a resource for sustainable agricultural activity. By cultivating vegetables locally, the project also supports environmental goals, including reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transportation. The excavation will be undertaken responsibly, with appropriate measures to prevent erosion during and after construction, and to preserve the natural surroundings as much as possible.

**Diagram 2: Site Plan Showing Proposed Excavation for Garden and Viewing Cones V1, V2 and V3 (Corresponding photos in Diagram 3).**





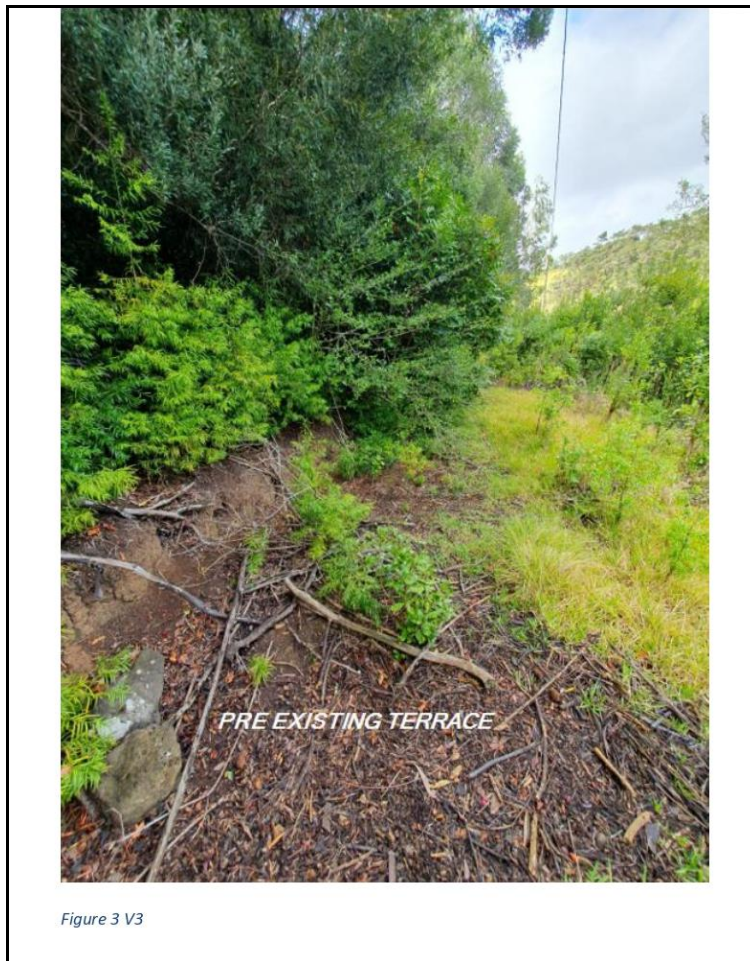
**Diagram 3: Photo for View Cone 1**



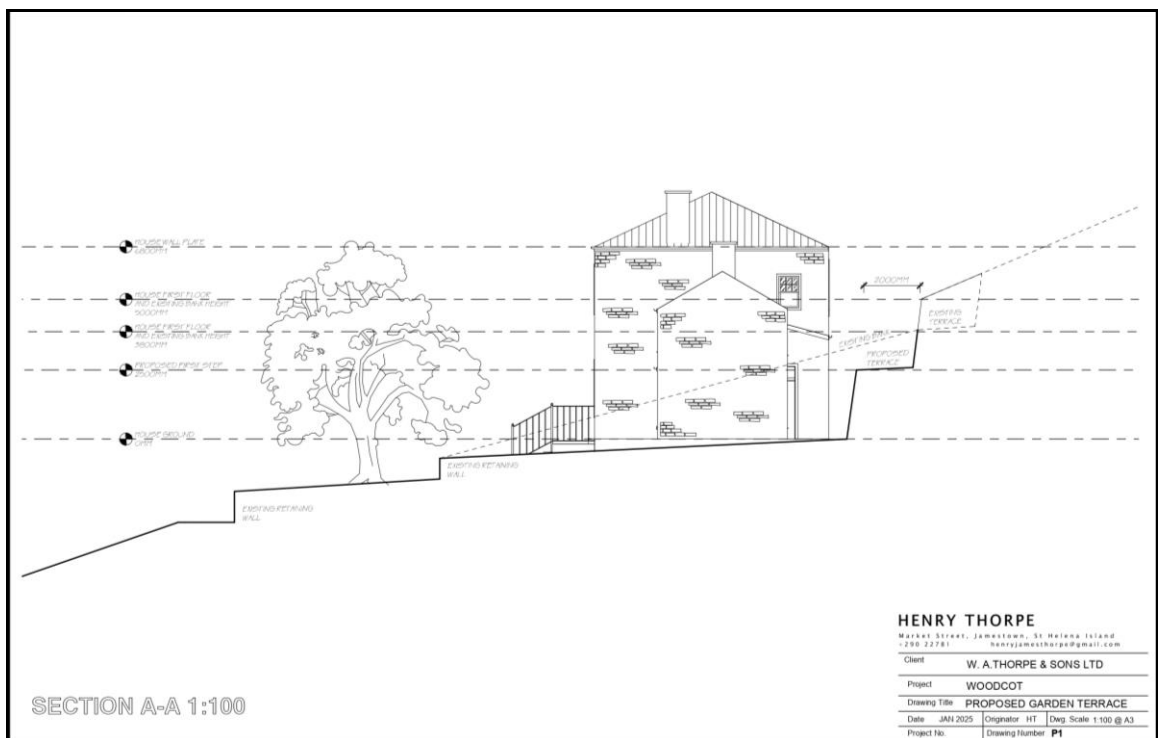
**Diagram 4: Photo for View Cone 2**



**Diagram 5: Photo for View Cone 3**

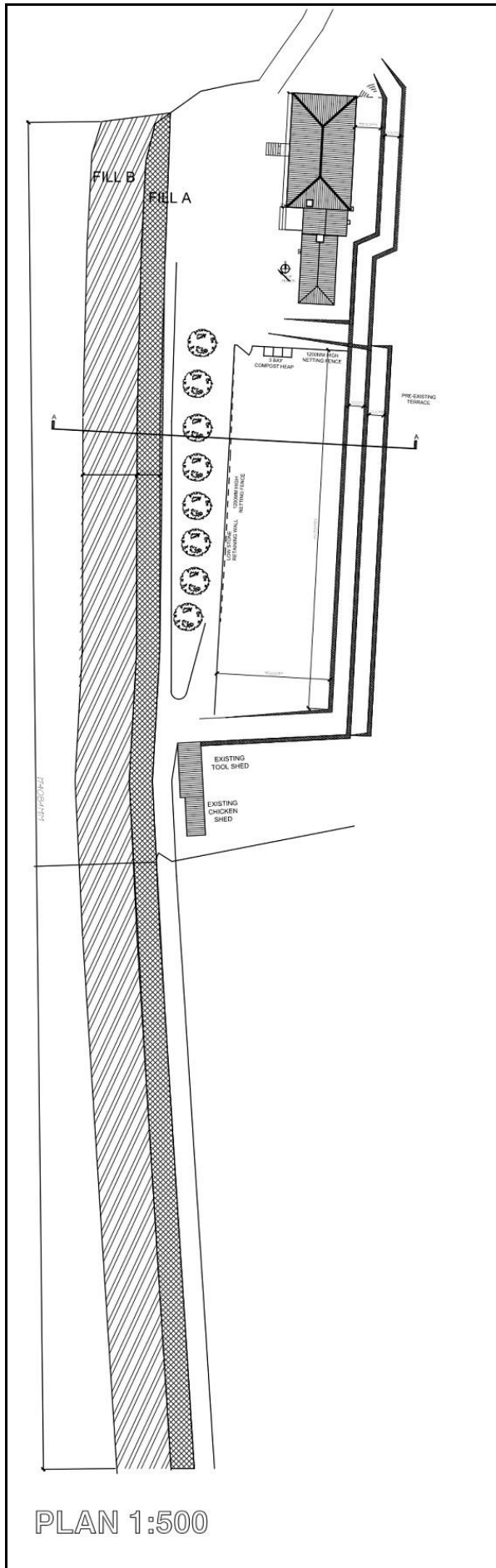


**Diagram 6: Excavation Site Section**





**Diagram 7: Excavation Site & Fill Plan**



SECTION A-A 1:200

There were no representations or objections received from stakeholders or any members of the public.

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:

- ## OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

The creation of the garden grounds would help support local food security by contributing to the availability of locally-grown, fresh produce to the community when there is produce that is surplus to the household requirements. This could be especially beneficial to the local community by contributing to fewer incidences of shortages in food supplies. This aligns with broader efforts to enhance food security, reduce reliance on imported goods, and support the local economy.



The proposal also promotes sustainable land use as it is an opportunity to make productive use of the land, by turning it into a resource for sustainable agricultural output. The cultivation of locally grown vegetables also supports environmental goals, including reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transportation from overseas.

The Applicant assures that the excavation will be undertaken responsibly, with appropriate measures to prevent erosion during and after construction, and to preserve the natural surroundings as much as possible.

Planning Policies for the Green Heartland require the grant of development permission to be strictly controlled with Policy GH.5 requiring landscaping of the site to sufficiently conceal any development or blend it into the landscape. Policy GH.3 b) refers to that 'no change to existing ground levels of 3m or more are made in connection with the building or its surrounding...' Planning Policies for Agriculture & Forestry states that permission will be granted "for expansion of agricultural production to meet the islands development needs provided such expansion shall be sited to avoid areas of important biodiversity". Policy BH1a) states 'developments which encourages, supports and includes conservation of historic structures and their setting, including buildings, monuments and fortifications and related artifacts will be permitted with appropriate requirements including planning gain, to ensure such conservation.'

In considering the abovementioned policies, the use as garden grounds is not seen as adversely impacting the amenity of existing development, and can be supported in terms of its element of agricultural purposes in line with policy AF1 a).

The most significant aspect of the development will be the visual impact on the landscape. Given the area is forested and there is a natural row of trees fronting the development site, it is not foreseen this development will have adverse impact on the appearance of the landscape when viewed from the wider areas or setting of the listed building. A condition will be added to ensure that the existing treeline would be retained to ensure the development is sufficiently concealed.

Considering this and to conclude; the proposal complies with the relevant policies and therefore can be supported.