

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA MAY 2025

APPLICATION	2025/14 – Construction of a 3-Bedroom Dwelling and Two Yurts
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	17 March 2025
APPLICANT	Jonathan Clark
PARCEL	JT150002
LOCALITY	The Old Playground, Upper Jamestown
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	Jamestown Historic
CURRENT USE	Vacant Land/ Former Playground
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Independent Newspaper on 21 March 2025.▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	4 April 2025
REPRESENTATIONS	None
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

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

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

This development site is at The Old Playground, near the former Quarry at Upper Jamestown, where the plot is designated within the Intermediate Zone and Jamestown Historic Conservation Area.

Diagram 1: Location Plan



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Developer proposes to construct a three-bedroom, single-storey dwelling and two, tourism-focused Yurt-type tent accommodation with the conversion of an existing building to provide a shared kitchen and combined toilet/shower room at the Old Playground, near the quarry, located in Upper Jamestown.

The proposal aims to bring this land back into use after being left derelict for a considerable number of years, with the prospect of contributing to the local economy while respecting the character of the surrounding area.

The proposal consists of two key elements; a single storey, three-bedroom dwelling that will be the Developer's primary residence, positioned to the right-hand side of the site closest to *The Run*. The dwelling would be set back from the front boundary to allow space for a garden or parking area at the front. The main residential dwelling will be constructed on a raised platform of 800mm, using wood or similar materials and will have a footprint of 160m² approximately.

The second part of the development are the two tourism accommodation Yurts, as detailed in Diagrams 9, 10 and 11 to be located on the eastern side of the site. Each Yurt-style tent will have a decked area at the front. The existing, derelict toilet block is proposed to be renovated into a separate, shared facility (using the existing infrastructure connections) to providing a basic kitchen on one side and a combined toilet/shower room on the other which is located to the eastern side of the site, adjacent to the Yurts. This aspect of the proposed development is designed to attract more budget-conscious travellers who may not have the means to afford existing accommodation options on the island.

The site will be accessible via the existing road network. The layout ensures clear and safe access to both the dwelling and the yurt accommodations. However, parking spaces are not identified on the plans submitted.

The Developer's proposal seeks to create a sustainable and aesthetically appropriate use of the land, integrating a well-designed residential dwelling with tourism accommodation.

Diagram 2: Site Plan Layout

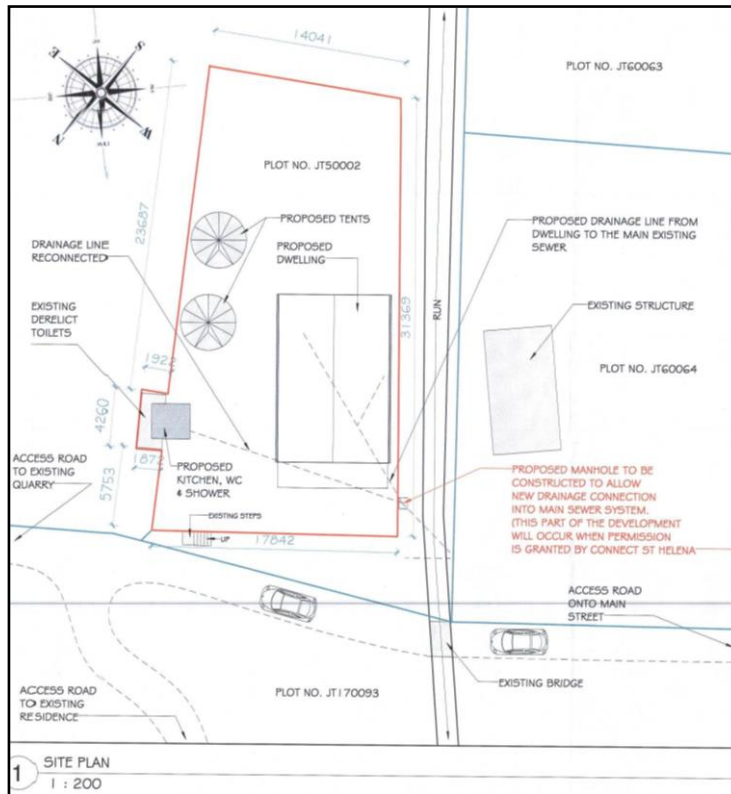


Diagram 3: Floor Plan Layout



Diagram 4: Elevation Plans

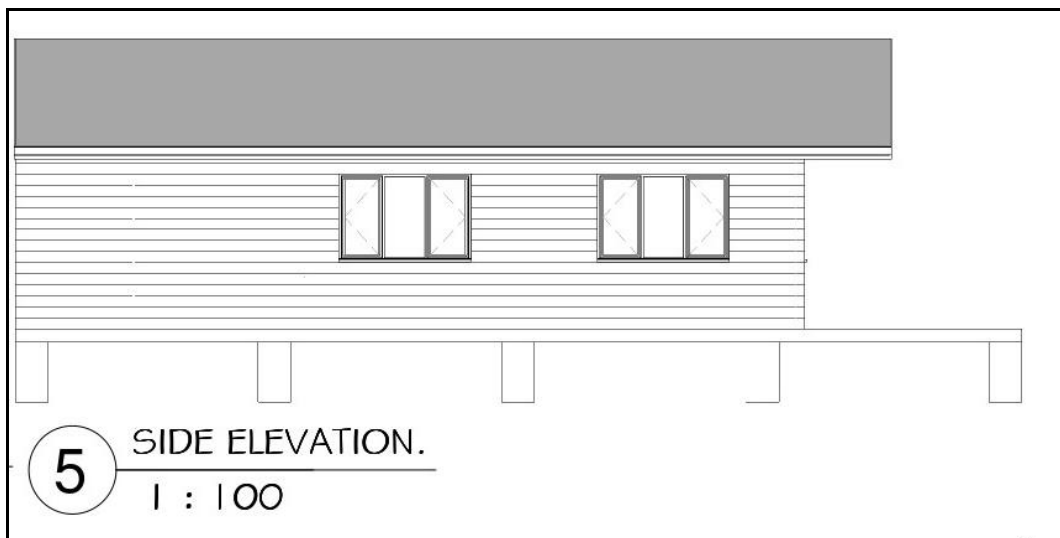
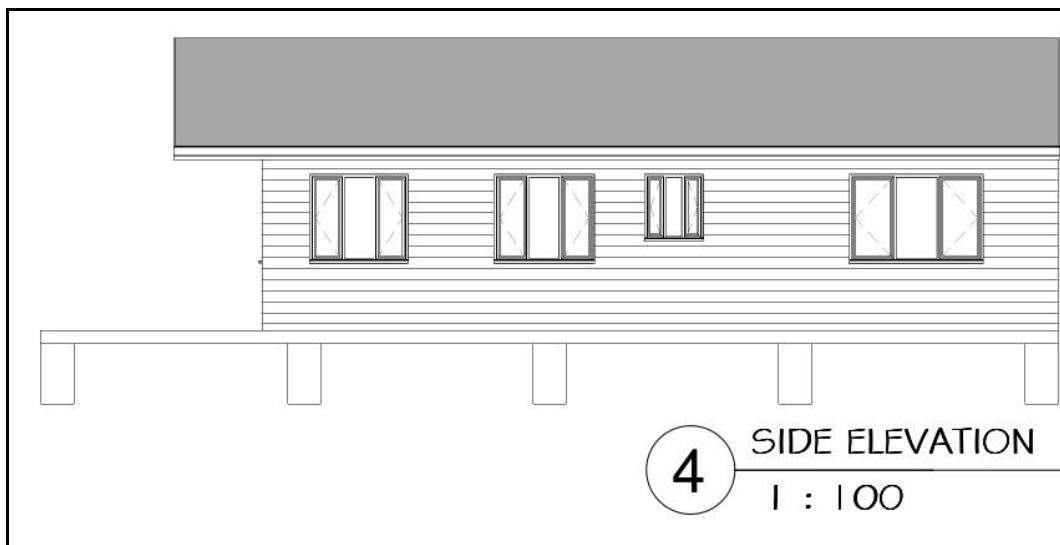


Diagram 5: Three 3D Visuals

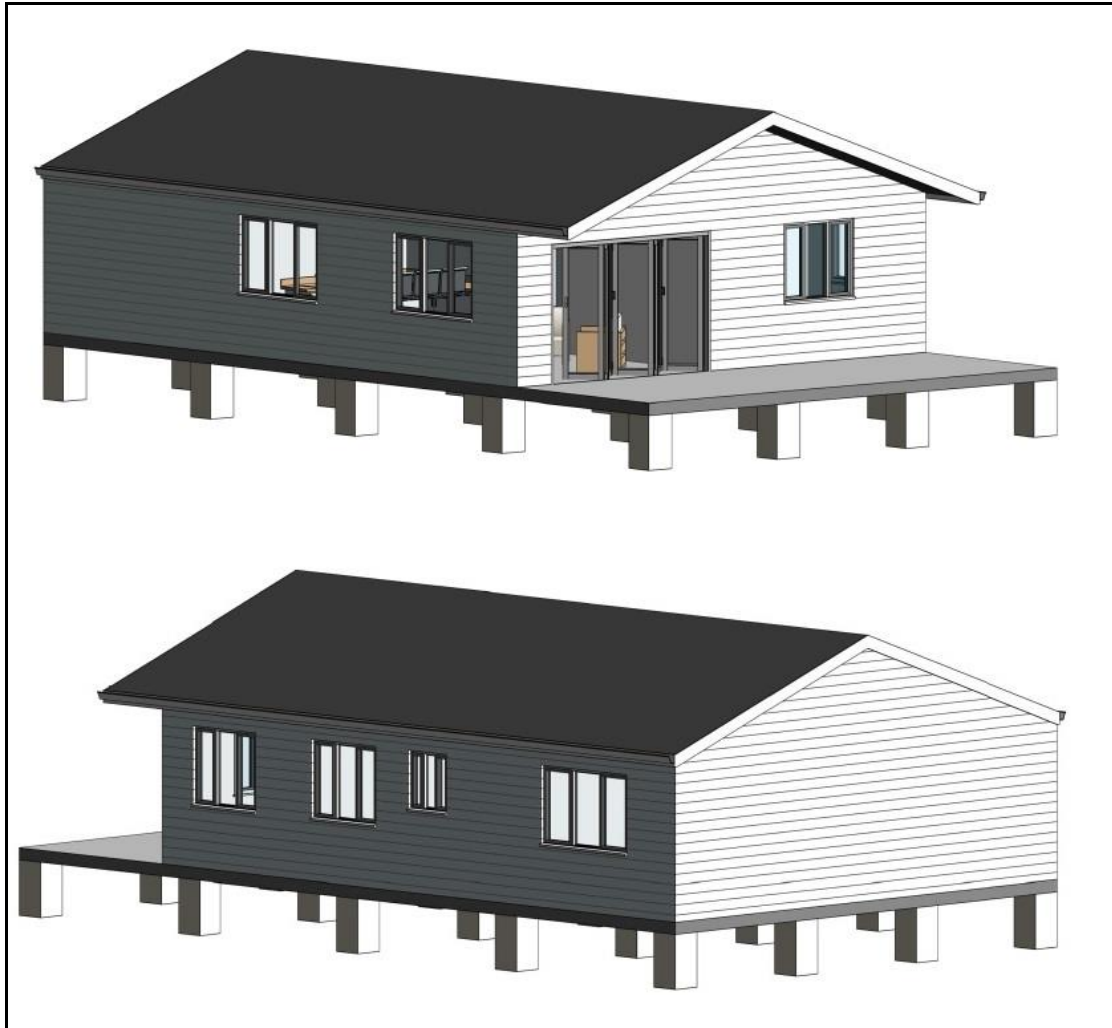


Diagram 6: Floor Plan of Outside Kitchen & Combined WC and Shower

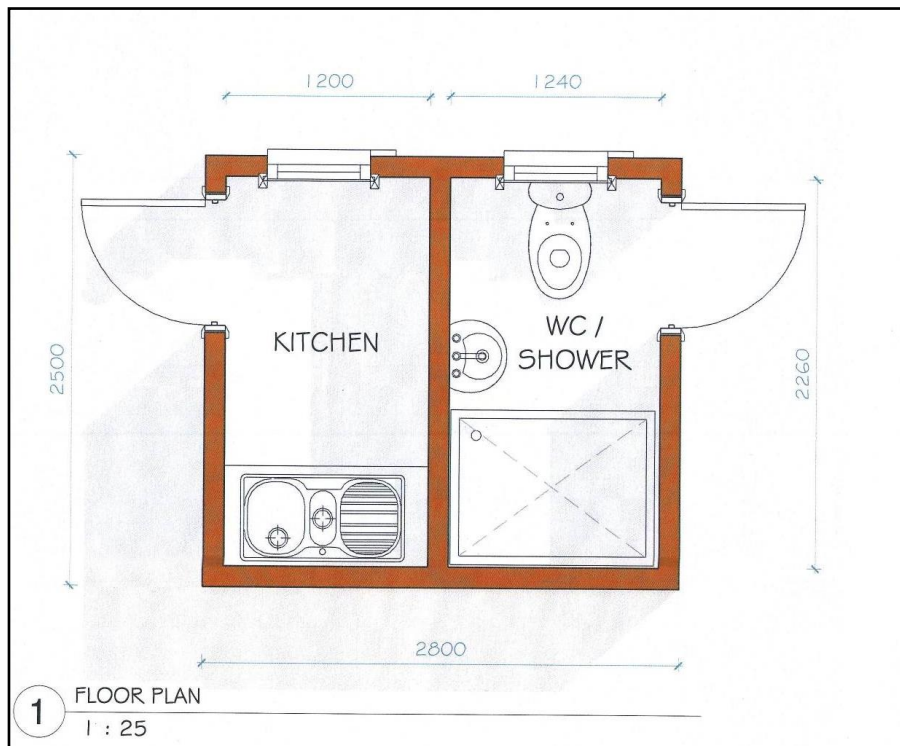


Diagram 7: Elevation Plans of Outside Kitchen & Combined WC and Shower

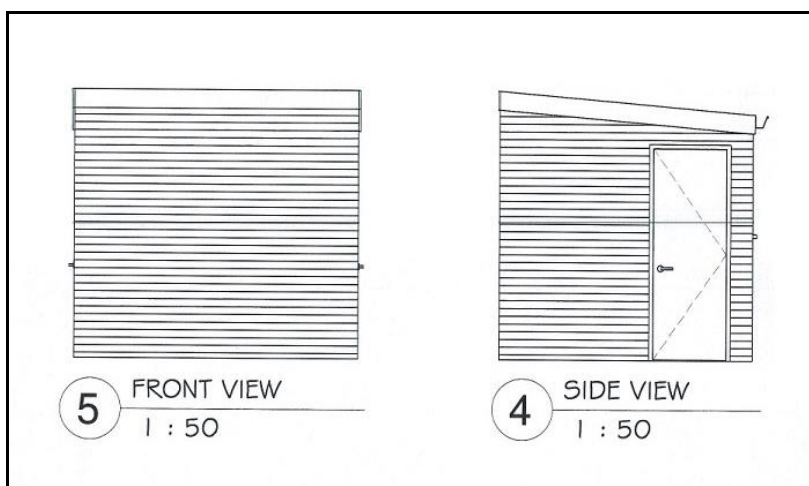
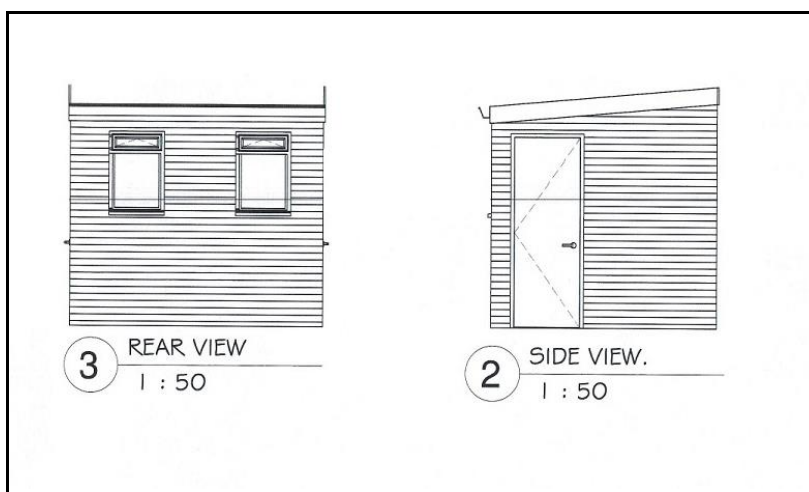


Diagram 8: 3D Visual of Outside Kitchen & Combined WC and Shower

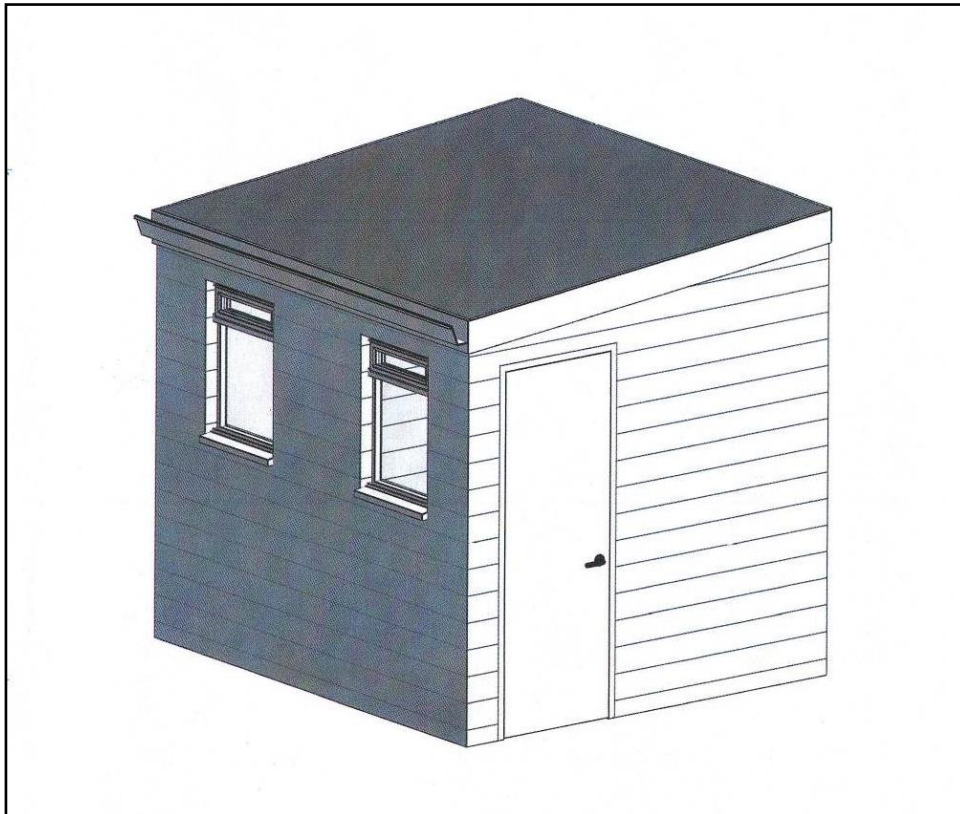


Diagram 9: Schematics of Proposed Yurts

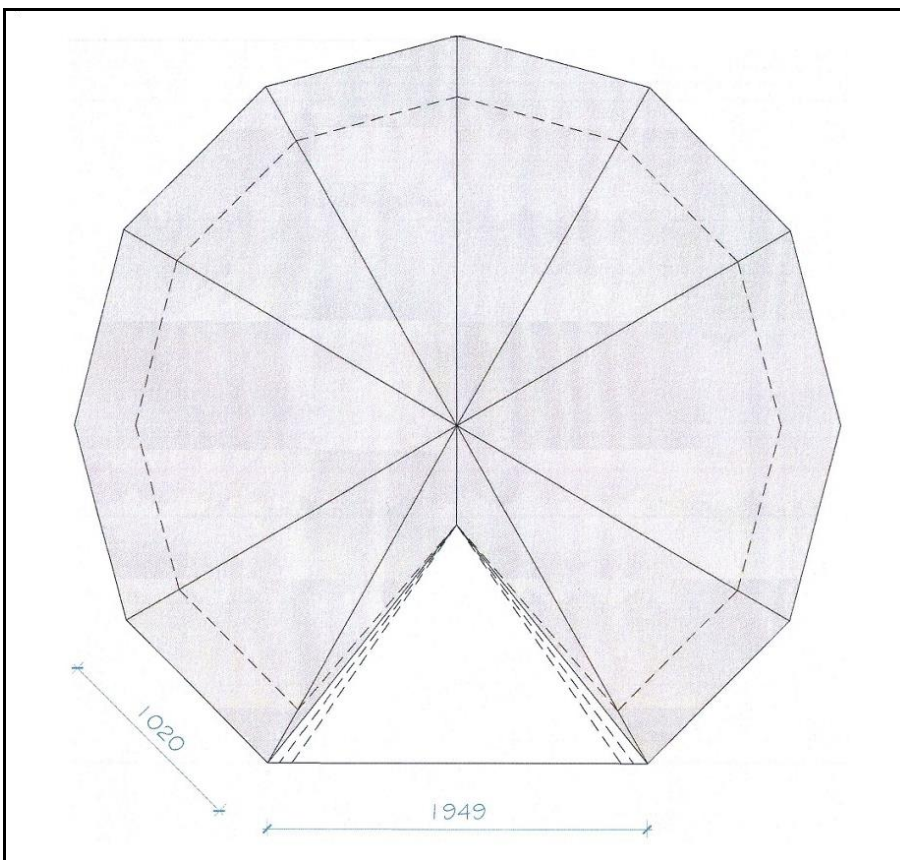


Diagram 10: Schematics of Proposed Yurts

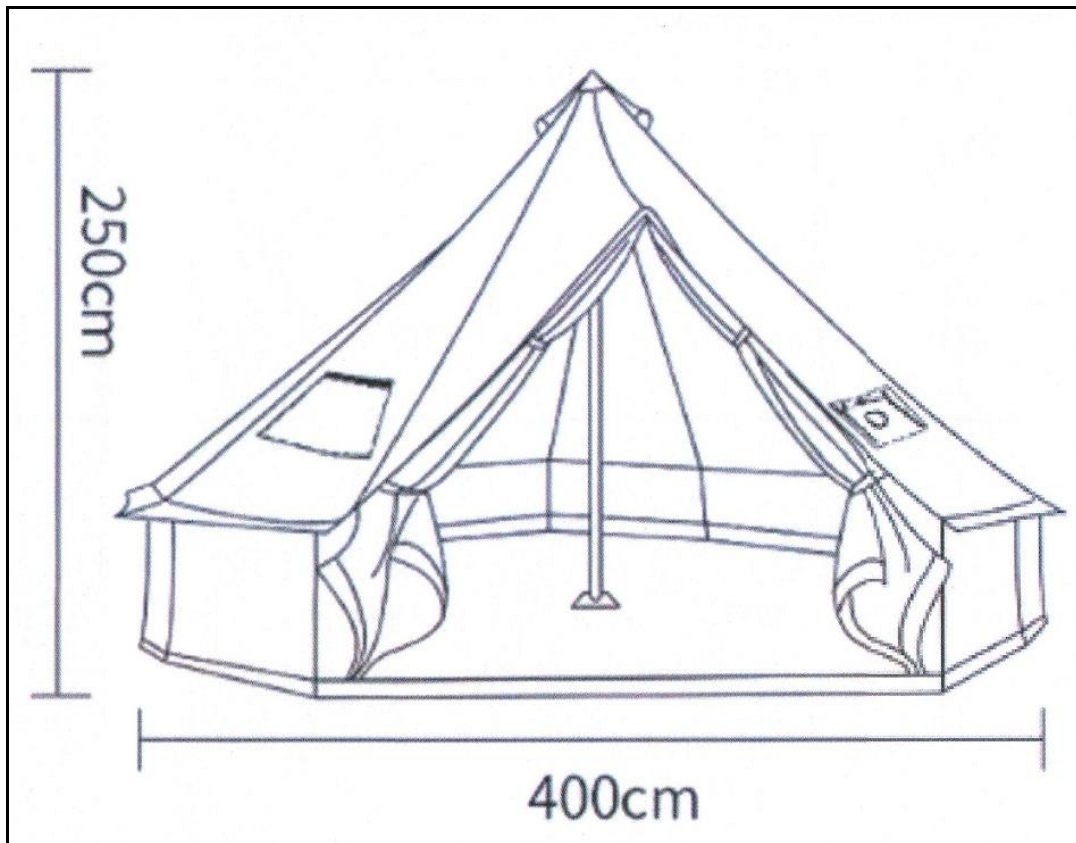


Diagram 11: Image of Proposed Yurts



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There were no representations received from any members of the public. However, an objection was received from *Connect St. Helena Sewage & Water* and various comments were made by stakeholders as detailed below—

Connect St. Helena – Sewage & Water

Connect object to the application on the grounds of the Jamestown sewer system is currently being over-extended, hence it became over time more ineffective and under-designed in treating raw sewage properly. As a result a subsequent odour nuisance is now prevalent as well as environmental issues – as only partly treated effluent is released into the receiving environment. In light of this, a new sewage treatment facility is earmarked for Jamestown, which is currently the subject of a planning application. Once implemented, Connect will review its position on this application.

Economic Development

Economic Development is in full support of this application. The tourism business associated with this application will provide a novel lower cost addition for beds in the tourism sector and is welcomed.

Environmental Health

Is there a drainage plan for the separate toilet and kitchen to be used by tourist? Where is the roof water going to?

The Heritage Society

The Heritage Society is pleased to see this enterprising proposal to bring the derelict area into use and accepts that, although the site is in the Jamestown Historic Conservation Area, the normal architectural standards demanded by LDCP Built Heritage Policies can be relaxed in view of the immediate surroundings. The Society does however recommend (a) that the proposed kitchen / toilet block should be provided with a pitched roof of about 30°, (b) the site should be provided with a sufficient parking area clear of the roadway and (c) there should be a landscaping and planting scheme, with irrigation from the Run, to achieve some privacy to users of the yurts going to and from the toilet block and blend the appearance of the development into its setting. These requirements can usefully be enabled through planning conditions rather than demanding revised plans and consequent delay.

Property Division

This property was advertised and was accepted as residential use and construction of toilet/ shower block/ kitchen facilities and erection of semi-permanent yurt tents.

Good to see the adherence of conditions as to what was agreed. All conditions within decision notice will need to be implemented and adhered to.

St. Helena Fire & Rescue Service

The St Helena Fire & Rescue Service has no objections to this application.

With regards to the three Yurts that is intended for tourism accommodations. As these Yurts will be used for sleeping accommodations, passive & active firefighting media will need to be installed. The SHF&RS can provide guidance.

The separate shared Kitchen facility will also need passive & active firefighting media installed, a scaled plan of this Kitchen will need to be provided.

Roads Section

Roads has no issues but please get an opinion from the Rock Guards if any issues in this area.

Rock Guards

The Old Playground site near the quarry at Upper Jamestown is no more at risk of rock fall than any other part of the greater Jamestown area and is safer than some other areas of Jamestown.

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 Policy IZ1 (a, b, d, f, g and h)
- Built Heritage Policy BH1; BH2
- Housing Policy H1 a), b), H2, H8, H.9, H11
- Tourism T1 a) T2 f)
- Water: Policy W2
- Road and Transport Policies: RT1 (c and d), RT3 and RT7
- Sewage, Storm and Drainage: Policies SD1 (b, c), SD3, SD4 and SD7

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

In considering this development proposal for a three-bedroom, single storey dwelling and tourism-focused yurt accommodation, the following aspects of the application are considered—

Loss of Children's Playground/Safety

Given the location of the development site; a former quarry area and derelict playground in Upper Jamestown, the Health and Safety aspect of the proposal is a

primary general concern, specifically with regard to potential rock fall. Consequently, expert advice was sought and received from the Rock Guards, for which an official report was provided to the Leaser of the Land, *Property Services, Saint Helena Government*, that confirms the site is no more at risk of rock fall than any other part of the greater Jamestown area and is deemed safer than some other parts of Jamestown. The loss of a playground to another land use, even if the playground has been derelict for some time, in Jamestown means that this would remove a designated play area such that there continues to be no outdoor public play area available for children in the Capital City, apart from the Pilling School playground. While Rock Guards do not consider the site to be at risk, in relation to the continuing use of the land as a playground, perceived concerns regarding children playing here remain. There is however no specific planning policy for the provision or retention of public play spaces for children. It is therefore considered acceptable for the redevelopment of the existing playground to another land use.

Housing Supply

It is proposed to increase housing supply by one dwelling in Jamestown. It is considered that this would meet Housing Policy H1 and Intermediate Zone Policy IZ 1 which support the provision of additional residential accommodation.

Impact on the Conservation Area

Policy BH1 supports development which does not adversely impact on historic structures and their settings and which, in Conservation Areas, enhances and protects the character of the Historic Conservation Area.

The application site is within the Jamestown Historic Conservation Area. As a former children's playground, it contains dilapidated play equipment and a small ancillary building, however, none of the structures etc. are of historic merit and their loss would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This means that the whole site is available for redevelopment which would enable it to satisfy Policy BH1 c), providing the new development enhances and protects the character of the Conservation Area. It is considered that the scale of development of the proposed dwelling would in respect of its proportions, details and external materials be in character with development in the locality of this part of the Conservation Area such that it would satisfy Policy BH1. The proposed Yurt-style tents are not in character with any current local development within the Conservation Area, nonetheless there are camping grounds across the Island and it is not considered, given their location away from main roads/public viewpoints, that they would result in any significant harm to the Conservation Area.

Tourism

The proposal's 2 Yurts will provide a new form of more affordable tourist accommodation on the Island and help to diversify the Island's tourism sector. As tourist-focused accommodation, Yurts are intended to attract budget-conscious travellers who may not have the means to afford existing accommodation options on the island, contributing to the local economy and offering a more inclusive range of tourist/ visitor to the Island.

The proposal would satisfy Policy T1 a) T2 f) which seek to enable and encourage sustainable tourism development to drive economic development of the Island.

Visual Impact on the local environment

This development proposal will bring this land site back into productive use and will enhance the local area, transforming a long-derelict space into a functional and attractive development, while respecting the character of the surrounding area.

The dwelling would be single-storey and in timber. While not typical of materials in Jamestown, timber is a material being used for more recent dwelling development on Island. Given the variety of external materials in the locality, it is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in any negative impact on visual amenities.

Whilst the proposed Yurt/tent- accommodation is not a typical style of tourist accommodation within the local area of Jamestown, they will be sited in a very 'tucked-away' area of Upper Jamestown, away from the main public routes of the street scene and not easily visible to the general public. Furthermore, the Yurts are only intended to be erected during peak tourist season and at times when they are in demand, otherwise, they will be deconstructed and stored away until such time they are needed again.

This will result in an improvement in visual impact of the currently derelict site and help to meet sustainable objectives such that the proposal would not be materially damaging to the amenity of existing developments, satisfying Policy IZ1 a) and b).

Parking Provision

While no car parking locations are shown, it is considered that adequate space could be provided for parking for vehicles in front of the proposed dwelling. However, in line with Policy RT.7, there is no requirement for parking spaces to be provided off-road in Jamestown Historic Conservation Area, such that no conditions will be attached requiring provision at the application site.

Sewerage

Connect St. Helena Water & Sewage, raised a standard objection in relation to the sewage system issue in Jamestown. However, this point has been addressed by the Developer who is currently investigating an alternative means of dealing with sewage, in line with Policy IZ1(g). This is covered by a proposed planning condition.

Conclusion

While the now dilapidated playground would be lost, this development creates a sustainable and aesthetically appropriate new use of the land which has been vacant/abandoned for some time. It includes both a permanent residential dwelling with tourism accommodation that has been designed with sensitive considerations to the immediate environment within the Jamestown Historic Conservation Area. The proposal aligns with the needs of visitors while ensuring minimal environmental and visual impact.

The development proposal can be supported, as it would have no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Jamestown Historic Conservation Area or on general amenity or aesthetic of the immediate area. The proposal complies with the Intermediate Zone, Built Heritage, Housing and Tourism policies and therefore can be supported.