

Planning Officer's Report - LDCA NOVEMBER 2020

APPLICATION	2020/77 – Proposed Construction of a Prefabricated Steel Building for Drainage Depot including minor Earthworks for access and construction of the base slab and also a vehicle turning area.
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Permission in Full
REGISTERED	2 nd October 2020
APPLICANT	Connect St Helena Ltd
PARCEL	FP0468
SIZE	2.84 (1.116ha)
LAND OWNER	Crown Estates
LOCALITY	Red Hill Treatment Plant Work Site
ZONE	Intermediate Zone
CONSERVATION AREA	None
CURRENT USE	Treatment Plant Work Site
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent Newspaper on 9th October 2020 ▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	23 th October 2020
REPRESENTATIONS	None Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Water Division	Applicant
2. Sewage Division	Applicant
3. Energy Division	Applicant
4. Fire & Rescue	No Response
5. Roads Section	No Response
6. Property Division	No Response
7. Environmental Management	No Response

8. Public Health	No Response
9. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
10. St Helena Police Services	Not Consulted
11. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	Not Consulted
12. Enterprise St Helena (ESH)	No Objection
13. National Trust	No Response
14. Heritage Society	Objection - Comment

B. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS SUMMARY (approximate / rounded figures)

Proposed Store & Warehouse Footprint	:	220m ²
Apex Height	:	5.3m
Eaves Height	:	4m

C. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY AND ZONING

The development site is within the Redhill Treatment Plant, and falls within the Intermediate Zone with no conservation area restrictions. This main depot area contains number of buildings, storage containers, water tanks, open storage areas and vehicle parking related to the utilities operations of Connect.

Diagram 1 Location

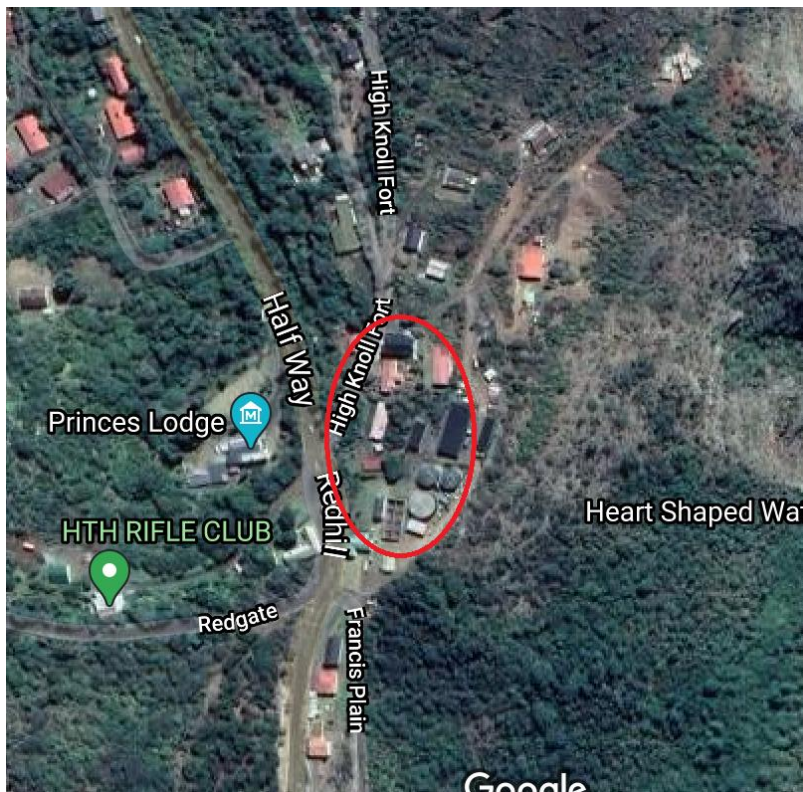


Diagram 2 Site Plan

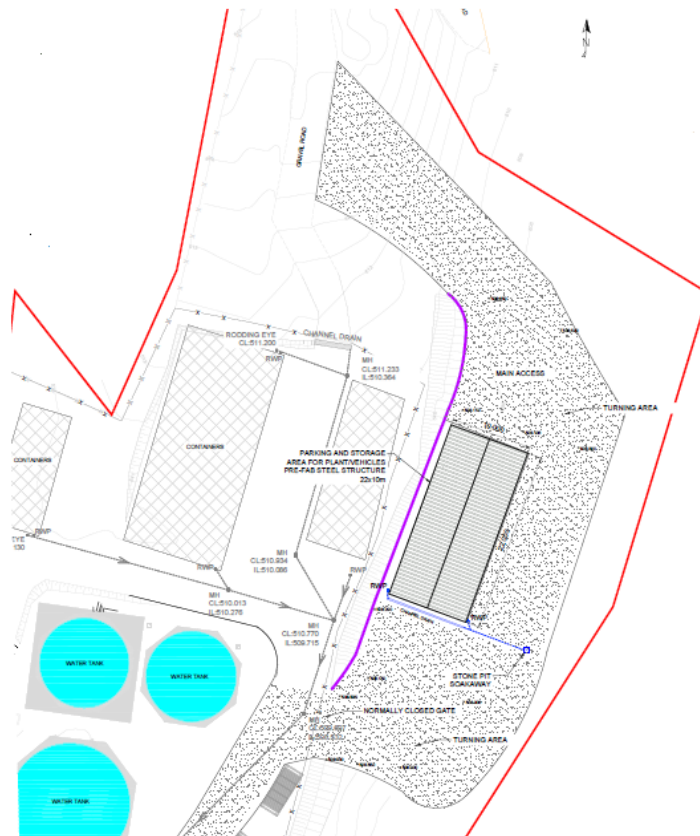
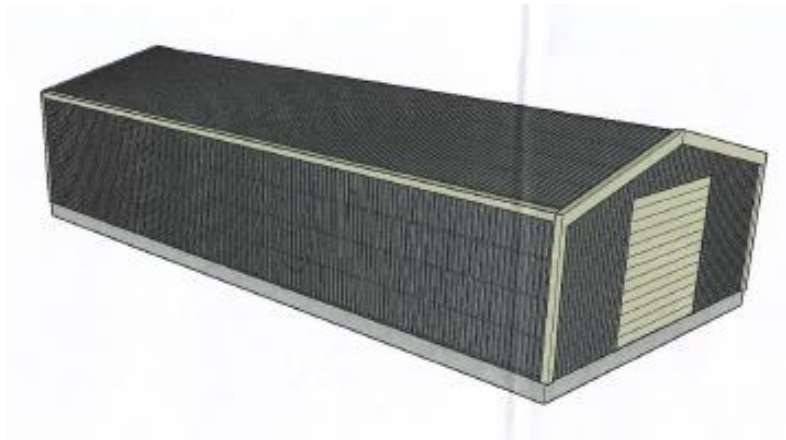


Diagram 3: 3D Perspective of the Building



THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to erect a prefabricated steel building on the eastern side of the Redhill Treatment Depot. This will entail extension of the original depot area on the eastern boundary. The proposal will include an access track to the lower area and construction of a concrete base to place the steel building. The building will 10.0m by 22.0m with a pitched roof. The height to the eave will be 4.0m and 5.3m to the ridge. The colour of the prefabricated building will be dark green to blend in with the landscape. It is proposed that there will be planting and vegetation on the eastern edge to reduce the impact of the development in the landscape.

Diagram 4: End Elevation



There will be stone pit soakaway to dispose of the stormwater from the roof of the container

Diagram 5: Diagrammatic Perspective of the development



PLANNING HISTORY

In November 2019, development permission was granted for the construction of two prefabricated steel buildings and associated works, Ref; 2019/45. That application was for originally for three prefabricated steel buildings, however, as there was concern with the location of the third building on the eastern boundary, the applicant was advised to reconsider this position due to the potential visual impact of the development on the landscape. At the time of the 2019 application, the applicant was in urgent need for a decision due to an urgent need for storage, the proposed building on the eastern boundary was deleted from the proposal with the view to discussing the addition storage needs with planning officers.

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION

Following the approval and construction of the building, there have been number of discussion with the applicant to consider alternative options for additional buildings to be located on the site.

Having reviewed the facilities on the Depot with the applicant, the conclusion is that there is insufficient space within the site boundary for additional buildings except for extending the depot facilities on the eastern boundary which also form a ridge to the hillside facing Francis Plain. The potential visual impact of this proposed development in the landscape is therefore an issue to be considered.

Given that there are physical restrictions and recognising the potential visual impact, the applicant has now submitted the development application for the additional storage building on the eastern edge and has including proposal for planting and landscaping as advised by the officers. One of the requirement of the Depot operation is that storage of equipment related to the different operations such as water treatment, and those related sewage must be kept separate to avoid cross contamination.

The location of the storage building on the eastern boundary is considerably lower than the main Depot site and has number of shrubs and small tree that reduces the visual impact of the large containers and buildings already located on the site, as viewed in the wider landscape from number of locations particularly from the Francis Plain area. With additional planting of tree and shrubs on the eastern boundary the visual impact of the proposed development can be softened in the landscape. Furthermore as the main site is higher the buildings are already visible in the landscape. The darker greener colour finish blends better within the greener lush landscape.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

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)

The proposed development is in compliance with the objectives of the LDCP policies that are applicable for this development.

CONSULTATION

The stakeholder consulted on the development application have no concerns. Comments have been received from the Environment Management Team stating that this will be a large building in the landscape, however if this will assist with the tidying up of this site, then would be beneficial. Question is raised regarding the piecemeal nature of the development of the site and suggest that the owners should an overall plan for the future development of the site.

REPRESENTATION

A representation has been received from the Heritage Society in respect of the proposed development and the issues raised are summarised below:

- proposed building is close to the boundary of the Green Heartland Zone, two Conservation Areas (Heart Shaped Waterfall and High Knoll) and is close to crest of the hill; the visual amenity of these should be protected from local and distant views;
- it is clear the applicant has considered this and if the proposed Juniper Green for roof and wall is dark green it will help to reduce its visual impact. If approved the dark colour should be a condition;
- drawing CSH RH 001: the roof ridge-line is shown higher than the adjacent containers but on the AMD elevational drawing it is shown lower than the containers;
- ensure reduced visual impact on the crest of the hill it would be better if the proposed new roof was lower than the top of the containers, as in the AMD drawing and could this be achieved with a shallower roof pitch, reduced eaves height or reduced road level or a combination or all three;
- drawing CSH RH 001: plan and section shows considerable disparity in the relationship between the existing containers and the proposed building, the section shows an earth bank in front of the containers that is propose to be removed, however it appears to be a designed landscape bank to reduce the visual intrusion from distant views;
- similar new bank would be an advantage to do the same for the new building. However the section does not extend v across the full new hardstanding area and so that is not clear and this areas needs additional detail and landscaping;
- Society would object if there is insufficient landscaping to obscure the proposed building from distant views.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Whilst number of issues raised by the representation are relevant in the consideration of the proposed development, however they are not considered to raise major issue of opposition to the development. The two conservation area are within the vicinity of the application site, however it is considered that there is immediate impact. Given the higher position of High Knoll the development site is visible, but the additional building on the site is unlikely to have any more visual impact than there is already.

The slight disparities in the drawing is not a big concern, the important issues that the dimension of the building on the main drawing are correct to determine the height. The 3D impression is assist in the assessment of the impact and details can be slightly distorted, particularly with the imaging of the land terrains. The development could benefit from additional landscaping and this can dealt with as a condition to reduce the visual impact on the landscape.

There is probably no overall plan for the future direction of development for this site, however, as this proposal was part of the earlier development application, it appears that there has been some thought on the need assessment of the operation and how this can be met. Following concern from the planning officers on the proposal and subsequent discussion to review alternative options, the applicant has given thought to the overall in the planning of the site.

Diagram 6: View in the landscape



MATERIAL CONSIDERATION

The Connect Depot is well established in this location and over the years it has expanded its operations on the site and is probably now nearing its potential development capacity. The operations on the site are important for the service that Connect provide to the Island's community. Given that there are land constraints and few or no options for locating the building within the existing boundary, currently defined by the chain-linked fence, extending the site eastward is an option to create additional space. Having considered the site assessment with officer from Connect and the need for additional space for the operations, the proposal as put forward with landscaping options should be supported. With the appropriate landscaping and colour finish proposed for the building, the potential visual impact on the landscape has been minimised.