

## Planning Officer's Report - LDCA FEBRUARY 2022

<b>APPLICATION</b>	2021/75 – Erection of a Road Sign
<b>PERMISSION SOUGHT</b>	Full Permission
<b>REGISTERED</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>APPLICANT</b>	St Helena Airport Limited
<b>PARCEL</b>	PB0039
<b>LOCALITY</b>	St Helena Airport, Prosperous Bay Plain
<b>ZONE</b>	Coastal Zone
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	None
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Airport & Approach Road
<b>PUBLICITY</b>	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Independent Newspaper on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021</li><li>▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.</li></ul>
<b>EXPIRY</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	None Received
<b>DECISION ROUTE</b>	<del>Delegated</del> / LDCA / EXCO

### A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1. Water & Sewerage Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Objection
3. Fire & Rescue	No Response
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Heritage	No Response
6. Environmental Management	Comments
7. Public Health	No Response
8. ANRD	No Response
9. Crown Estates	No Response
10. Police Services	Not Consulted
11. Aerodrome Safe Guarding	The Applicant
12. Sustainable Development	No Response

13. National Trust

No Response

14. Sure SA

No Objection - Comments

## **B. APPLICANTS RATIONALE**

This document has been developed to provide some background and explanation to the development permission request of St Helena Airport Limited (SHAL) to erect a road sign at the aerodrome boundary.

### Background

It should be noted that the Highways Authority (HA) previously gave permission to St Helena Airport in 2017 to erect barriers at the foot of Mole Spider Hill and Creeper Hill; this was as a result of damage to the Airport car park which occurred over the festive period of 2016 when members of the public drove vehicles and rode motorcycles in an erratic and dangerous manner that caused damage to the car park surface.

Additionally, given the remote location of the Airport, concern was raised about the safety of individuals who may use the car park out of hours and suffer injury as a result of an accident. The lack of nearby dwellings combined with the topographical nature of the area (meaning that vehicles and people could not be easily seen) meant that if an incident occurred involving injury to a member of the public, this may not be discovered until the Airport is next manned. Although CCTV is in operation at the site, it is not monitored 24/7 and neither is 24/7 security in place; accordingly, the safety of the public using the Airport cannot be monitored when the Airport is closed.

This issue, combined with the need to secure the Airport and its car park when the Airport is not manned, led to a request to erect barriers across the entrance to the aerodrome in order to control access; accordingly, the barriers were erected at the aerodrome boundary to present a physical barrier. In conjunction with the barriers, it was intended to also erect a sign so that users of the Airport were aware of the boundary and the extent of the Aerodrome Regulations.

### Legal and HA advice

Prior to the completion and operationalization of the Airport in 2016, the Aviation Ordinance was enacted in 2015. This Ordinance contains Aerodrome Regulations, which applies the equivalent of byelaws to the site of the aerodrome; these Regulations apply to everyone who enters the aerodrome.

Given that the Aerodrome Regulations apply at the boundary, it is felt that there is a need to highlight the location of the boundary to those visiting or using the Airport so that they understand where the Regulations start and finish. Visitors to the site include members of the travelling public, staff, 'meeters and greeters', representatives of the owner of the Airport (St Helena Government), and other stakeholders, including those who may be crossing the aerodrome land to get to fishing spots or undertake the Gill Point Postbox walk.

Accordingly, it has been decided to erect a permanent road sign to indicate to everyone approaching the boundary where the Regulations begin; additionally, the Aerodrome Regulations will be displayed in the Terminal Building to ensure users of the Airport are aware of prohibited acts and those acts that require prior permission from Airport management.

Advice on the size, colour and type of sign that would be suitable and acceptable to the Highways Authority was sought in 2017. They advised SHG Airport Directorate and SHAL to contact the Police and the AG's Chambers for legal and practical advice on the specification required for the sign. Although some general advice was received, it was not sufficient to give a clear indication on the design requirements of the sign e.g., material, size, colour, etc. Rather, the advice appeared to suggest that SHAL should make a proposal and this would then be considered by the Highways Authority.

However, advice from SHG legal on the wording used on the sign was sought and was agreed upon, and therefore it is on this basis that SHAL wishes to proceed with the installation of a permanent sign.

#### Sign design and siting

The design of the proposed sign by SHAL has taken cognisance of the following:

- The need to accommodate all of the agreed wording
- The need to have a sign of sufficient size to be legible to traffic passing it up to the posted speed limit for that road (30mph)
- The need for the sign to be visible at night upon illumination (by headlights)
- The need for the sign to be located off-road and at a sufficient height to be visible from a distance
- The need for the sign to counter the rigours of the harsh environment in which it would be located
- The sensitivity of the immediate environment surrounding the sign.

SHAL contacted an on-Island company to make the sign but unfortunately the company has not been forthcoming with a design, costing, or timeframe for

completion. Accordingly, SHAL has contacted a UK-based signage firm who has quoted for the development of a suitable sign. Its specifications are:

- Size – 2708mm (h) x 2444mm (w)
- Material – RA2 reflective on Dibond (aluminium) complete with channels on the rear for post mounting. It would be covered by an overlay film that would protect the sign from UV rays and help to protect it from graffiti.
- Mounting - erected on 2 x 168mm diameter posts with appropriate fixing clips. Proposed clearance from the ground would be approximately 1.0m but this can be adjusted to suit HA requirements. This would give a maximum height above ground of approximately 3.71m.

The sign would preferably be mounted off-road at the foot of Creeper Hill and would face traffic approaching the Airport. This site has been chosen because:

- It co-terminates with the barrier line and the beginning/end of the Aerodrome Regulations;
- It is (to some extent) protected from the general wind direction and strength by Creeper Hill;
- It is located away from sub-surface service ducts.

Alternatively, the sign could be mounted at the foot of Mole Spider Hill, however this would be in the vicinity of sub-surface service ducts, a sensitive area for the endemic Mole Spider, and possibly subject to higher winds.

The land the sign would be sited on is Crown land and is in Parcel PB0039.

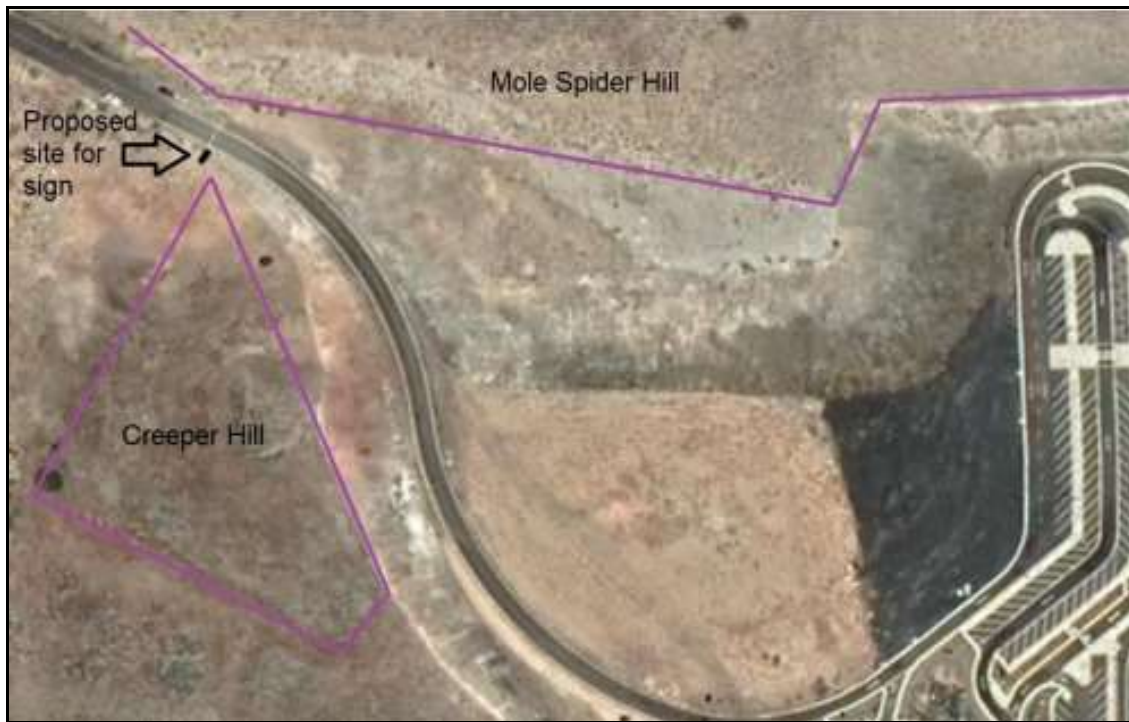
The sign will read as follows. As noted previously, this wording has been agreed with AG's Chambers as suitable to inform those entering the aerodrome of the regulations and lack of public right of way:

Aerodrome Regulations apply beyond this point  
Any breach could result in penalties

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Notice is hereby given that there is no public  
right of way over the lands known as St Helena  
Airport to which this entrance affords access

An approximate location for the sign can be seen below; this can be amended to suit HA requirements; however, it is strongly recommended that it is located in the immediate area of the barriers to indicate the actual location of the aerodrome boundary (from both a legal and practical perspective).

**Diagram 1: Location Plan**



The next photograph has some added annotation. Note that the photograph is not to scale, however the height of the existing barrier is correct (5.2m):

**Diagram 2: Proposed Sign**



#### Installation method

Given the environmental sensitivity of the immediate area, precautions will be in place to minimise the damage to the surrounding area. Permission from Crown Estates will be sought before commencing the works, and the works will only take place on a non-flight day to minimise disruption to road traffic.

Holes of sufficient depth will be dug to accommodate the vertical supporting columns to which the sign is affixed, using concrete in the ground to reinforce the supports. Any construction vehicles required to dig the holes will be located on the road to minimise the likelihood of causing damage to the surface crust; traffic cones/signage will be used to warn approaching drivers of any temporary disruption to the carriageway in which construction vehicles may be located.

Excess spoil will be deposited evenly in the surrounding area. Disturbance to the surrounding surface area by human activity will be minimised when connecting the sign to the supports, and the airport's Environmental Officer will be on hand to ensure any Wirebirds or other endemics are not disturbed or injured during the installation process.

Once the supports are in place, the surface around the base of the supports will then be made good to minimise disruption to the immediate environment.

#### Weather conditions

The company providing the sign have calculated that the sign would be able to withstand constant wind speeds of up to 35-40kts. The wind speed and direction in this area is quite variable and therefore it is possible that occasional gusts would exceed 35kts; however, with deep foundations and correct fixings, it is believed that the sign would be sufficiently strong to withstand the elements.

The graph below shows the wind conditions at the southern end of the runway at St Helena Airport (RWY02), which is in direct line-of-sight and wind direction with Mole Spider Hill and Creeper Hill. As can be seen, the average wind is around 10-12kts, and the maximum (occasional) wind can gust up to around 40kts. Wind speeds at the intended installation site may vary slightly due to the surrounding topography, particularly in comparison with the flat and unhindered area around RWY02 where the wind speed gauge is located; therefore, the graph should be used for indicative wind speeds at the installation site, not actual measurements.

## **STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

Two comments was received from stakeholders. One from Environment Management Division and the other Sure SA Ltd.

**EMD** - I support the application in principle but am concerned at the size of the sign and would question whether it could be smaller and still achieve the intended aims. I do not support the suggestion that the sign could alternatively be sited at the foot of Mole Spider Hill as this is a sensitive area. We have had temporary signage in place at this location advising of the sensitivity of the area and prohibiting access and this could be made permanent in the future. The sign would be much smaller than that proposed and would therefore be 'hidden' if this Airport sign was also sited in the same location.

**Sure SA Ltd** – Underground telecoms ducting possibly in close vicinity of proposed sign installation. Please dig with extreme care, preferably by hand, when excavating for the supports.

## **OFFICER ASSESSMENT**

In the case of free standing signs, this development exceeds the guidance within the advertisement policy. Justification has been provided behind the specification particularly the design aspects of the sign. Since the submission of this application, there has been two incidents at the Airport that has gone to court, which relied on the existence of the aerodrome boundary, therefore it is essential a sign is installed soon. The applicant has advised that the sign has already been ordered as a result of the incidents. It is of the Officers opinion, that the sign will have a significant visual impact and there may be an opportunity to re-design. However recognizing the exceptional circumstances, it is considered acceptable to grant development permission for a three year period, which will also allow for a possible re-design.