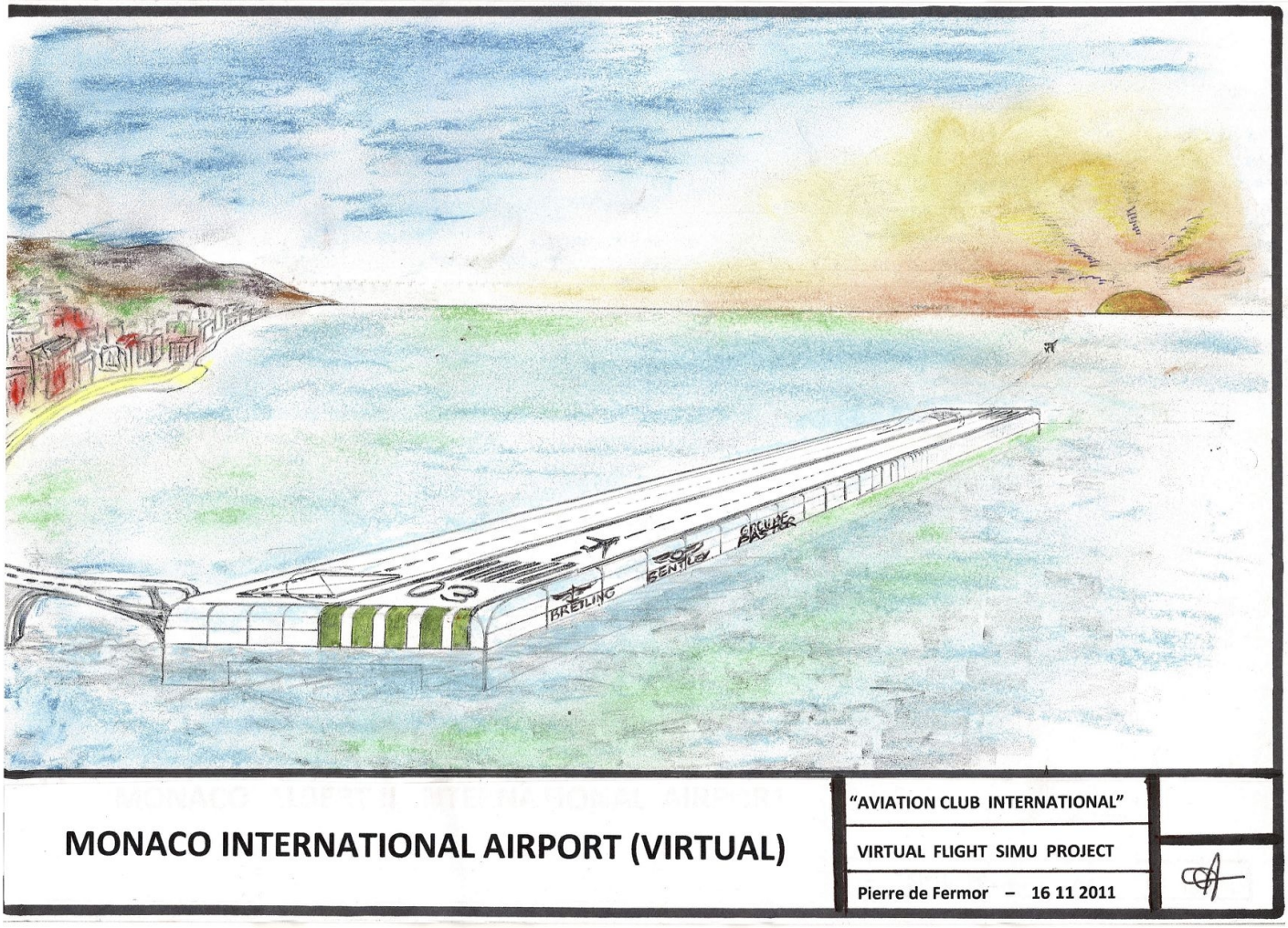
MONACO AIRPORT : A JETSET REQUIREMENT !

News / Airports / Routes



By Pierre de Fermor

President Aviationclub International

Aviationclub International has been animating a think tank on the exciting issue of an airport in Monaco since November 2011.

Initially the idea was to engineer a virtual airport situated in the Principality, to be uploaded to existing simulation tools so that to allow « sim-pilots » to land in to and take off from such an exciting location.

What were (and still remain indeed) the main assumptions for such an airport to operate ?

1. This airport could only be located offshore, an obvious requirementwhen considering the

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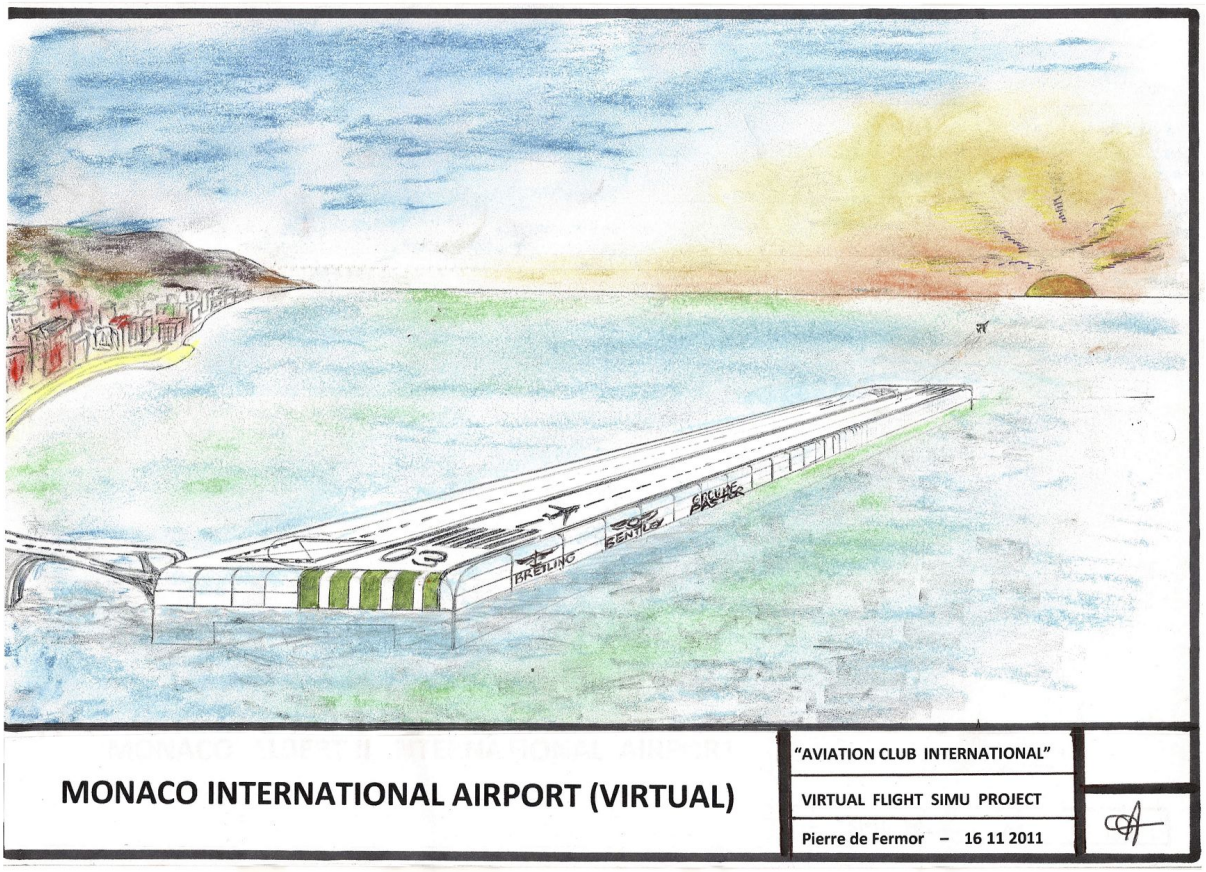
absolute lack of place on the tiny (but so sparkling) Principality.

2. A floating device would then be the most appropriate, considering the construction cost as well as environmental issues so rightly dear to the Sovereign Prince.
3. Airport would be restricted to general aviation, so that to limit the frequency of inbound and outbound flights as well as to feature a runway with an acceptable lenght, a requirement which does fit with the fact that it would be aimed at a limited number of users able to travel high style, Nice airport being close enough for larger size aircraft piping in and out more ordinary tourists.
4. It would incorporate the existing helicopter terminal which is now far too small for Monaco and would ideally be used for other developments.
5. It would offer one runway only and a parallel taxiway, featuring on both ends a large elevator (aircraft carrier type) allowing aircraft to be swiftly carried and parked under.
6. It would be entirely financed by a to be selected consortium, which would recover construction cost and generate profits through incorporating a luxury hotel, luxury flats and shops, all located partially above the sea level and partially under it. Boat jetties would also be available.
7. It would have to be elegantly designed, flat and distant enough from the waterfront, so that not to damage the seaview from the existing shoreline.
8. It would appropriately have almost the same alignment as the runways at Nice airport (04, facing north-east, and 22, facing southwest), with a minor 10° correction for a smoother approach and departure, considering the shoreline. Proposed alignement was therefore 03 – 21.

Hereunder was the drafted result :



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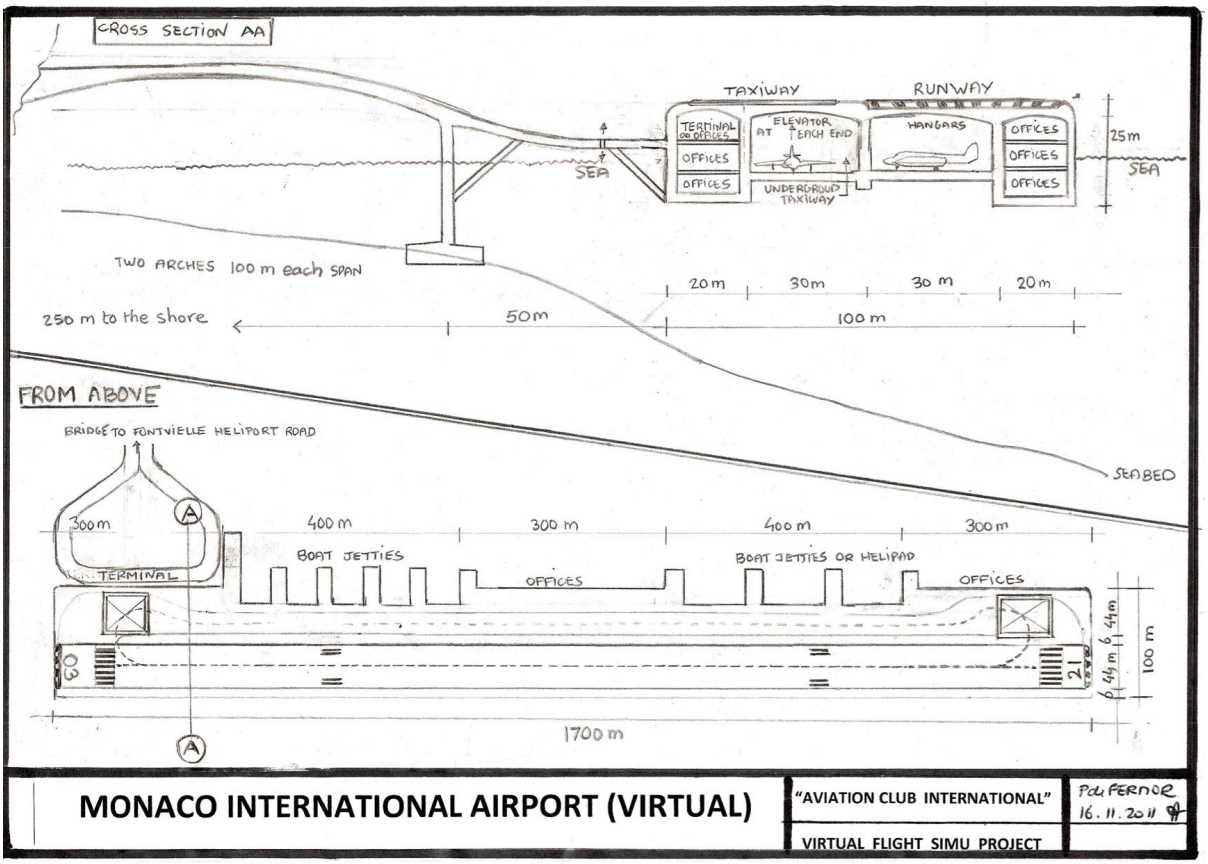
A cross section and lay out scheme imagining such a possible construction, hereunder shown, provide more information on such a floating airport :

- Runway would have a lenght of 5 600 ft (approximately 1 700 mtrs) and a width of 145 ft (44 mtrs), allowing for exemple for the latest Dassault business jet aircraft , the magnificent Falcon 8X, to land and take off there: Requirement is 6000 ft (1829 mtrs) for take-off and 2150 ft (656 mtrs) for landing.
- Taxiway would have the same lenght, and the same width or slightly lower.
- The concrete structure would incorporate aircraft hangars and car parks in the middle and the air terminal, offices and flats all along on each side. which sides would be fully glass panelled so that to be almost perfectly hidden from the shore, reverberating the sea and the sky on their surface.



Let us now discover a possible location of the airport in the Principality, proposed at a time that did not consider the now planned construction to be built offshore Lavoretto Beach. Monaco airport was then « virtually » located abeam Fontvielle (where the present helipad is situated) and Monaco-Ville ; a position which still makes some sense.

Still, a « real » airport might have to be located further abeam the seashore, this as much as legally and technically possible.

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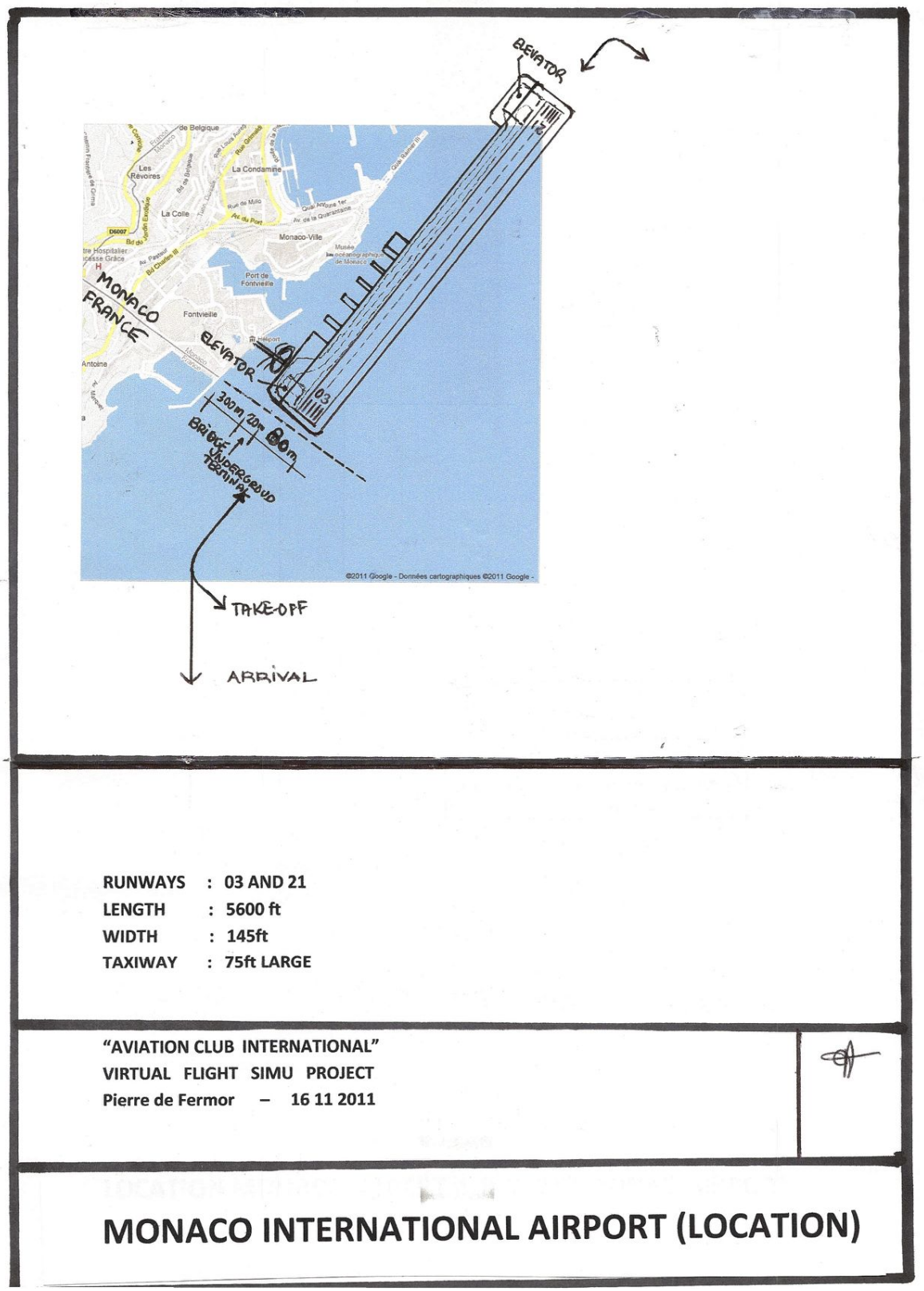

This brings the question : Would actually such an airport, presently so virtual, become a possibility in Monaco ?

Today certainly not, mainly for environmental reasons (sound issues, air pollution, possible disturbance of marine life to be analysed, etc.)

What about tomorrow, and when can be this tomorrow ?

In my opinion, such an airport will happen. The reason is simple, this is indeed the very last luxury

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life style item that Monaco does not possess yet. A hi-tech General Aviation airport featuring a whole world of luxury boutiques, hotel, flats, offices is almost … a necessity !

When will it happen then ? Well at the time that the Sovereign Prince will agree to it on an environmental point of view (as I do think that economics will not really be questionable here) : That could well become a reality at the time that General Aviation aircraft including business jets will be motorised with electrical engines, something which is going to happen sooner than we may expect :

Airbus is actually envisionning an electric-powered hybrid 80-90-seat regional airliner that will be available to the market in the 2030s.

Much earlier, around end 2019 (which is tomorrow), a new Airbus subsidiary to be soon set up, named VoltAir, will develop and produce the two-seat E-Fan 2.0 and the four-seat E-Fan 4.0, both aimed at the general aviation market, with prices competitive with these of current piston-engine light aircraft (around $300,000).

General Electric have their own development program for electrically powered aviation motors.

Elon Musk, the innovative owner of Tesla cars, powered with electricity, said recently : « I have a design in mind for an electric aircraft ». Before diving in too far, Musk said he was “too busy” to work on the aircraft further today, « but that will happen ».

So the decision might look simple : Yes to such an airport, with an access restricted by regulation to electrical (or solar powered…) aircraft !

Such a floating airport will need some six to eight years to be financed, designed, engineered, built and regulated : Right time to give it some consideration, Your Serene Highness, aviation enthusiast and great fan of the Wild Blue !

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SOURCE: AEROCLUB
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