

STATES OF JERSEY



ISLAND PLAN 2022-25: APPROVAL (P.36/2021) – THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT TREES AND WATER FEATURES

Lodged au Greffe on 9th July 2021
by the Connétable of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “the draft Island Plan 2022-25” insert the words “except that –
after paragraph b. of Policy NE2 – Green infrastructure and networks, the following paragraphs should be inserted, with the subsequent paragraph re-designated accordingly and the Plan further amended in such respects as may consequentially be necessary –

- “c. ensuring that new trees are planted in the ground if at all possible, with the re-routing of any underground services and other measures that may be necessary to achieve this being undertaken as part of the development;
- d. ensuring that, where appropriate, lost watercourses are restored and new water features provided in the public realm, especially in urban areas; and”.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to approve, in accordance with Article 3(1) of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, as amended by the Covid-19 (Island Plan) (Jersey) Regulations 2021, the draft Island Plan 2022-25, **except that –**

after paragraph b. of Policy NE2 – Green infrastructure and networks, the following paragraphs should be inserted, with the subsequent paragraph re-designated accordingly and the Plan further amended in such respects as may consequentially be necessary –

- “c. ensuring that new trees are planted in the ground if at all possible, with the re-routing of any underground services and other measures that may be necessary to achieve this being undertaken as part of the development;**
- d. ensuring that, where appropriate, lost watercourses are restored and new water features provided in the public realm, especially in urban areas; and”.**

REPORT

In-ground trees

The draft Island Plan notes on page 110 that “in the Island’s built up areas, ... green infrastructure is less prevalent, and ... its introduction can be impactful and deliver multiple benefits for town residents and the urban environment”. Some opportunities to plant new trees in St Helier, however, have led to the use of planters, allowing the trees limited root room and leading in some cases to stunted or sickly trees which add little to the environment. Unless trees are planted in the ground they will never become the sort of specimens that are described as ‘champion trees’ in the Plan, and which there is a fine example of at the top of my street. Trees that are not planted in the ground obviously require regular watering while the planters themselves rarely complement the public realm: more often than not they obstruct pedestrian movement and look unsightly, especially when they are full of weeds and cigarette ends.

Anyone undertaking a tree planting initiative in town will be told that the tree(s) must go in planters due to the presence of underground services; this is to be expected, perhaps, in older parts of the built up area, though it is to be regretted that utility companies have located services underneath recently constructed pavements, too, such as alongside the International Finance Centre (IFC), so that the trees along its eastern side have had to go in planters. There is, of course, a cost involved in re-routing services to enable a tree to flourish, but the extra expense of making ‘a proper job’ of tree planting will be less when the cost of maintaining trees in planters, as well as the other costs associated with them, are taken into account.

The purpose of this amendment is to enable a condition to be imposed on developments that include tree planting, so that in-ground services are re-routed and any other measures taken that are necessary, with the extra cost of these works to be included in the overall project cost.

Lost watercourses and water features

During the past two decades I have been made aware of opportunities to restore lost watercourses, such as sections of the town’s ancient brooks, that have been considered by developers to be impractical or too expensive, while opportunities to introduce new water features have been turned down, too. It was particularly disappointing that the idea of a moat around the IFC which came out of early consultation on the Esplanade Masterplan – a watercourse that could have been substantial enough to support aquatic flora, with all the benefits in terms of biodiversity and wellbeing that would have resulted from it – was reduced in scale to what can best be described as a rill or sheen of water at the entrance to the IFC, pumped, needless to say, at vast expense, for reasons of ‘Health and safety’ – or so I was informed; this at a development just yards away from the sea!

Although most of the Island’s urban areas are enhanced by their proximity to the sea, there is a lack of water features, especially the brooks and streams which have been culverted and covered to permit development. However, opportunities to restore them do arise from time to time and I believe that the Island Plan should require developers to give them more serious consideration than has been the case in the past, while refurbishments of the public realm and new provision should include water wherever possible. Aside from the obvious benefits that will accrue when new fountains are

present in our public places, there are opportunities for interpretation of the Island's heritage in respect of the lost watercourses, including some which are the origin of electoral boundaries.

Financial and manpower implications

The extra costs of ensuring trees are planted in the ground, wherever possible, and of introducing or re-introducing water to the public realm in urban areas should be funded as part of the overall project costs of the development concerned.

Child Rights Impact Assessment implications

These amendments have been assessed in relation to the [Bridging Island Plan CRIA](#). Improved well-being of children will arise from any improvement in the Island's 'green' or 'blue infrastructure' that may result from these amendments, subject to the necessary risk assessments and safe methods of operation involved in providing water in the public realm.