

STATES OF JERSEY



FIELDS 181, 182 AND 183, ST. PETER: RESTRICTION ON DEVELOPMENT (P.133/2004) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 20th July 2004
by the Environment and Public Services Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is in response to Report and Proposition P.133/2004 lodged 'au Greffe' on 6th July 2004 by the Deputy of St. Peter.
- 1.2 In responding to the proposition, the Environment and Public Services Committee wish to point out that an application was submitted on 23rd December 2003 which has yet to be determined. The Committee have indicated that they are minded to support a scheme for 72 homes subject to the satisfactory resolution of a Planning Agreement as defined under Article 8A of the Island Planning (Jersey) Law 1964. The Committee has responsibility under the Island Planning Law to determine the application.
- 1.3 The proposition requests the States to refer to their Act dated 10th July 2002 in which they agreed to rezone Fields 181, 182 and 183, St. Peter for Category A Housing and to request the Environment and Public Services Committee to limit development on the site to a maximum of 54 three-bedroom two-storey units or 68 two-bedroom two-storey units or any equivalent combination of three and two-bedroom units.

2. The Island Plan

- 2.1 The States are reminded that in July 2002 they approved the Island Plan which brought forward a raft of new policies and proposals. Part of the Plan addressed the need to provide new housing for an identified and enduring need for First-Time Buyer and Social Rented Housing. This site, Field 181, 182 and 183 St. Peter, was one of those sites identified to meet that clearly identified need. This need to provide new housing for those who cannot compete on the open market is as strong today as it was in 2002. The new "Planning for Homes" which is currently in draft form recognises the changes that have taken place since 2002 but confirms that requirement to provide housing for First-Time Buyers and within the social rented sector has not diminished. This is the context within which this Report and Proposition should be considered.

3. Background

- 3.1 In June 2001 the Draft Consultation Plan, which was taken around every Parish, identified this site as capable of accommodating 55 three-bedroom homes or 65 two-bedroom homes. Housing was only one issue within a number of others discussed that evening. It was following an analysis of this and the other Parish meetings that the Planning and Environment Committee brought the new Island Plan to the States in July 2002. The estimated yield for the 3 fields was given as 68 homes. At this stage no sketch plans have been prepared for the site and the estimated yield was done as a reflection of the size of the site on an anticipated yield per acre. Specifically the new Island Plan went on to point out that –

“the figures are only an indication of yield per site because the mix of size and type of homes will be determined through the development brief process for each site including the need for sheltered homes”.

- 3.2 The mention of the Development Brief is important for it was only after the Development Brief had been prepared that the first drawings for the site were completed.

4. Site yield

- 4.1 The preparation of the Development Brief in 2003 after the approval by the States of the Island Plan gave rise to the first drawings being prepared.
- 4.2 It is at this point that it is useful to reflect on two matters raised by Deputy Egre. The first is the difference in the site yields. This is relatively straightforward. The figure of 54 comes from the Deputy himself and I can find no indication of this figure ever having been raised by the Committee in the Draft Plan or at the

meeting. The figures of 55 and 65 come from the Draft Consultation Island Plan and the figure of 68 was used in the approved Island Plan. All of these figures were estimates only using the size of the site as a determinant of yield. No drawings had been prepared at this stage.

4.3 The first drawings prepared for the scheme were done as part of the preparation of the Development Brief. The architects put forward a scheme for 87 homes. This scheme was shown at a public meeting at the Parish Hall in September 2003 and drew 50 letters in response. It was from these drawings for 87 homes, and taking into account the concerns and issues raised by those who had commented on the project, that the Environment and Public Services Committee began a detailed analysis and evaluation of the proposals which resulted in a reduction in the number of homes from 87 to the current figure of 72. This process whereby the aspirations of the developer are evaluated against the restraints and parameters of the Committee is a fundamental part of the work of the Committee. The reduction in the numbers quoted by the Deputy is a reflection of the extent to which the Committee and its Officers considered the scheme needed to be amended and reduced in scale. In seeking a reduction in the number of homes on this site the Committee and its Officers took into account the representations received in response to the plans, the context of the site, the terms of the Development Brief and the recommendations and policies within the Island Plan.

4.4 The Deputy has difficulty in understanding why the figures have changed. The reason is very simple; it is all part of the normal iterative process that the Committee and its Officers adopt in seeking amendments to a scheme in order that it represents a project that has satisfied all requirements and is capable of being granted approval.

5. Site size

5.1 The site has always been intended to include Fields 181, 182 and 183. The site was however measured inaccurately in its early stages. The site has been accurately measured at 5.1 acres. Clearly the underestimation of the site size gave rise to a low anticipated yield in the early stages.

6. Services

6.1 School

The Deputy makes mention of issues relating to schooling, traffic congestion and the disposal of surface water. The Education Department have been involved at every stage of the development. They are firmly of the view that the school can accommodate the number of children generated by the new development.

6.2 Roads

The Road Engineers of Public Services have carried out tests and traffic counts on the junction in the Village as a direct consequence of the proposed development. They are satisfied that capacity exists at the junction in the Village to accommodate the vehicles generated. It is conceded that there is congestion at Beaumont. The States took the decision in 2002 to approve the rezoning of land for housing in the West of the Island with the situation at Beaumont in mind. The importance of providing new homes for residents was regarded as essential however and the Committee were also of the view that through having new housing attached to an existing settlement with services such as schools, shops, church and post office would reduce the need for private car use.

6.3 Water

The disposal of surface water for the site will be addressed by a system of soakaways on site. The ground tests have already been completed and the results indicate that the system of disposal chosen will comply with the requirements of the Building Bye-Laws. They have been verified by the Building Surveyors. These tests have been carried out at this early stage to ensure there is no uncertainty that the method proposed for the disposal of surface water is adequate. The Committee are entirely satisfied that all the aspects of school, roads and drainage have been examined thoroughly.

6.4 Ground water

Concern has been expressed that the use of soakaways on site to dispose of surface water will exacerbate problems associated with surface water disposal on Jubilee Hill. Investigations carried out by Public Services have revealed no substantial problems associated with surface water on Jubilee Hill and it is considered that the possibility of delivering some water to the table slightly quicker than has been the case in the past will make no material difference to the position that exists at present. Notwithstanding that however, the Public Services Department has identified and will carry out within the next 2 months, work on the existing water drainage systems currently in place on Jubilee Hill to enhance their effectiveness.

6.5 The Parish maintain the responses have been unsatisfactory. They have not provided any substantive reasons why the results of significant work and analysis are unacceptable other than they do not accord with their own observations. The Committee and its Officers have made every effort to keep the Parish informed in relation to the investigations and the results of those investigations.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The Committee have always carefully considered the comments received. 50, not 85, comments were received as a result of the public meeting at the Parish Hall in September 2003 when the Development Brief and the first plans were presented. These plans were for 87 homes. The scheme has been reduced to 72 homes as a result of careful analysis and in response to the representations. Claims that no heed has been taken of the comments made ignores the facts.

7.2 The need for the Island to provide homes for its residents falls on all the Parishes. Each Parish must play its role and some Parishes might have to shoulder a greater burden than others given that they can already provide services for new residents that satisfy broad principles of sustainability. To build only 54 three-bedroom or 68 two-bedroom homes on this site would not represent the best use of this land for housing and it would not reflect our housing requirements. In addition it cannot be justified on the grounds of insufficient investigation or service provision as the Parish suggests.

7.3 The Deputy suggests that the conditions do not reflect the concerns expressed. The Deputy misunderstands how conditions are used. They are the final part of the regime of control implemented by the Committee. They need to be read in conjunction with all changes made to the plans from the time the scheme was first advanced. To examine them in isolation from the plan changes is to underestimate the extent to which the Committee has exercised its control over the development, and ignores the extent to which the scheme has changed from the first time the drawings were prepared and submitted.