



Connetable Mike Jackson
Chair, EHP Scrutiny Panel

BY E-MAIL

19th November, 2021

Dear Mike

Review of P.76/2021 (Draft Planning and Building (Amendment No8)
(Jersey) Law 202-)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft amendment to the Planning and Building Law. I am a Council member of the National Trust for Jersey and the Chief Executive of the NTJ has agreed that these comments come also from that organisation.

Conservation Areas

The proposed change to the law to enable Conservation Areas (CAs) to be designated would allow Jersey to achieve an aim that has been set out in the past three Island Plans (1987, 2002 and 2011).

Conservation Areas have been in existence in England since 1967, and they have existed in Guernsey (where there are 27 CAs) for many years. The use of this type of area based protection, rather than the protection of individual buildings, is consequently well established.

Jersey has made moves towards such area based planning since at least 2011, when a character appraisal of St Helier was carried out by Willie Miller Associates, commissioned by the Planning Department, which established a number of 'character areas' in the town. This assessment was updated by W Miller Assoc in 2021 as part of the work the has fed into the current draft Bridging Island Plan. Area based work has been carried out by the Design Council in developing the South-west St Helier Masterplan, which is guiding the Jersey Development Company's proposals for the waterfront.

The larger heritage bodies in the Island (Jersey Heritage, National trust for Jersey, Société Jersiaise and Save Jersey's Heritage) all agree that introducing CAs is long overdue and would help protect the island's cultural heritage and facilitate the regeneration of areas (particularly St Helier) in a way that is sensitive to the special qualities these places have.

The Association of Jersey Architects, which has historically campaigned both for the listing of buildings and the designation of conservation areas, also supports the introduction of CAs - stating this yesterday

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afternoon at the BIP hearing on 'Historic Environment'. It was instructive that there were no verbal representations made yesterday against the introduction of CAs.

The National Trust for Jersey, Société Jersiaise and Save Jersey's Heritage have all confirmed that we have the expertise on island to assess, characterise and set the boundaries of CAs. The Société Jersiaise has already sketched a number of potential boundaries, building on work first carried out in the 1980s by the Planning Department. In terms of pressure on IHE (Planning), therefore, the initial phase of designation would place minimal burden on government resources, would provide local employment and community engagement.

In general the use of area based factors to determine applications, rather than those for individual buildings, should help rather than hinder officers processing applications, as guidelines within CAs are typically very clear as to what is and is not permitted. In this light the work required to administer CA applications would not, I believe, require considerable additional resource. (I say this as a practitioner who has worked on listed building and conservation areas applications both here and in England, both as applicant's agent and within planning departments).

It should also be noted that buildings currently listed Grade 4 within CAs would be removed from the list, as the characteristics that have resulted in their listing (townscape or group value) are the same as those for CAs. This would reduce the number of buildings currently listed Grade 4.

The NTJ, SJ, SJH and Jersey Heritage have all made representations as part of the BIP consultation that CAs should be established in St Helier first, as this is where there is the greatest pressure of development. The benefits of heritage led development in St Helier are clearly shown by the recent refurbishment of Nos 4-6 Pitt Street and 8 Dumaresq Street (the 'Foot Buildings'). The establishment of CAs would enable more of the same to take place.

There appears to be a general consensus that Conservation Areas should now - finally - be introduced in Jersey. The benefits of CAs have been demonstrated both here and in England, and we have enough local expertise to take the work forward. The proposed amendment to the law is therefore warmly welcomed.

Yours sincerely

Antony Gibb