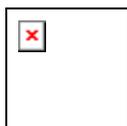


**ST. HELIER WATERFRONT: CONFERENCE HOTEL - RESCINDMENT**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 17th August 1999  
by Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

175

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## PROPOSITION

### THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -

to refer to their Act dated 10th November 1992 approving map No. 3-92 as the development plan for the St. Helier Waterfront area; and

- (a) to rescind their decision that a conference hotel should be sited overlooking the yacht marina west of the Albert Pier Reclamation Site;
- (b) to charge the Planning and Environment Committee, in consultation with the Policy and Resources Committee and the Waterfront Enterprise Board Limited, to create a green area for leisure use by the public on this site.

DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT

NOTE: As required by Standing Order 18B, the reason is given below, and the following States members signed the proposition -

Senator R.J. Shenton  
Connétable F.H. Amy of Grouville  
Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

The reason for moving this proposition is the public opposition to the building of a hotel on this site.

## Report

The development of the 'waterfront' (west of the Albert pier) has been an evolving one. Add to this the implementation of 'in principle' decisions taken years ago and one has a recipe for creating a patchwork construction rather than an harmonious one.

I have, for some time, been concerned about the way the States handle 'in principle' decisions. We must plan for the future, but those plans must be based on as much information as possible and not be inflexible. We must allow for revisiting plans in the light of changing circumstances. Too often, in my view, insufficient information is available from which to make a reasoned judgement and as a result members reluctantly accept a proposition with the idea that when it comes back to the House they will have more information and then be in a position to resolve the matter properly. Unfortunately, they usually find that when it does come back, agreements and plans based on the original decision have already been made, and all that is available for discussion are the details. In this way, it is my belief that States members have become unwilling 'accessories' to a certain amount of railroading by powerful committees.

The 'waterfront' site is the marine gateway to the Island, so it is paramount that we get it right. The plan (P.123/92) approved by the States in 1992 is now seven years old, it may have been the ideal outline at that time, but times have changed. No longer is tourism booming. Hotels are closing down at an alarming rate. Would the decision have been the same if these closures were happening in 1992? Would the decision have been the same if it had been known that the hotel would be nearly twice the size of that used in the market study by WEB and the Tourism Committee, when it was concluded that it (an hotel with 100 room less than that now proposed) would have a negative impact on existing hotels? Would the decision have been the same if it had been known that approximately 98 per cent of the public were against the building of an hotel on this site? We do not know what benefit this hotel will be to the Island, nor do we know details of its impact on our infrastructure.

I was dismayed that, in reply to a question of mine recently, the President of the Policy and Resources Committee refused to supply a cost/benefit analysis, enter into dialogue with the public or use his powers to delay the process until such discussion had taken place. It is to be hoped that the absence of instructions to delay will not get us into the familiar and unsatisfactory situation where our decisions are influenced by claims for enormous amounts of compensation. Such an event would simply inflame an already unsatisfactory situation.

This proposition is not about turning away this hotel, but rather deciding that the waterfront is not the right site for it. Not only would such a building overwhelm the site, even if only half the proposed height, but, more importantly, the public do not want it. Who are we to defy the public? A recent poll in the Jersey Evening Post returned 65 votes for the hotel and 2005 against. Such opposition cannot be ignored. At a public meeting I subsequently held, I asked three questions -

would a similar hotel, but of different design be acceptable?

Would a smaller one be acceptable, or would you prefer no hotel at all?

97 per cent of the 80 persons present (not including the dozens who telephoned their apologies) wanted no hotel on this site, but preferred it to be an open green place for leisure.