

**FORT REGENT REDEVELOPMENT**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 3rd March 1998  
by the Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

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## PROPOSITION

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

to approve in principle the redevelopment of Fort Regent into a modern community health and sports centre, as described in the accompanying report and detailed in the feasibility study report commissioned by the Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee and produced by Roger Quinton Associates Limited.

### SPORT, LEISURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

NOTES: 1. The Finance and Economics Committee initially considered the report and proposition of the Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee regarding the proposed future development of Fort Regent in July 1997.

At that time the Committee noted the need for an overall strategic plan for sport, leisure and recreation which identified, among other things, the demand for additional or upgraded facilities, the optimum affordable provision of such facilities in the Island and whether or not these facilities could be financed or part-financed by the private sector.

The Committee also commented that, in the absence of the above information, it could not support the request to invest over £20 million of public money into this project.

The Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee then prepared a strategy, but in the opinion of the Finance and Economics Committee it did not address the key outstanding issues.

The Finance and Economics Committee has endeavoured to assist the Sport, Leisure and Recreation

Committee in every way it can including arranging a number of meetings both at Committee level and between the Presidents or Vice-Presidents and senior officers. The Committee is therefore surprised and disappointed that, despite a number of consultancy reviews and reports, the essential and basic information it has requested has still not been forthcoming to an acceptable standard.

The information the Finance and Economics Committee is still awaiting is -

1. firm evidence of demand to justify the proposed level of expenditure;
2. evidence that other alternative means of meeting that demand have been professionally and exhaustively investigated;
3. details of the possibilities that could exist to attract private sector funding to finance or part-finance the project.

Until that information is provided the Finance and Economics Committee is firmly of the view that the proposed expenditure of over £20 million cannot be justified.

2. The Policy and Resources Committee shares the views of the Finance and Economics Committee. However, should the States decide to support the proposition of the Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee, the project will then need to be considered together with other capital requests in the decision conference for the future capital programme.
3. The comments of the Planning and Environment Committee will follow.

## REPORT

### Introduction

1. The 1996 Policy Review and Action Plan required the Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee (the Committee) to bring proposals to the States on the future of Fort Regent.
2. The Committee has considered a number of options for the Fort beginning in August 1995, when Scottish and Newcastle produced recommendations for the Fort to become a major tourist attraction with development being undertaken by the private sector. Fort Regent is the Island's premier pay and play community sport and recreation centre and a prerequisite of the plan would have required relocating this facility elsewhere in St. Helier.
3. Discussions took place with the Jersey Electricity Company Limited concerning the possible use of the redundant power station site, which would have provided the Committee with the opportunity to build a new community sport and recreation centre at Queen's Road. The Committee commissioned a feasibility study by Nigel Biggar and Partners, which confirmed the proposed site was ideal for building a new centre. Unfortunately, after many months of negotiations and having secured agreement in principle from both the Policy and Resources and Finance and Economics Committees that the States should consider the site as a strategic acquisition, the Jersey Electricity Company Limited withdrew its offer and decided to develop the site for its own commercial requirements.
4. The Committee, unable to secure a suitable alternative site for a community sport and recreation centre, decided to consider whether, and if so how, the Fort could be redeveloped to provide the Island with a modern sport and recreation centre, which would be cost effective and meet the needs of the community and visitors to the Island for future generations.

5. In September 1996 the Committee appointed Roger Quinton Associates Limited (RQA) to undertake a feasibility study, (funded through the Central Planning vote) of Fort Regent Leisure Centre under the following terms of reference -

To undertake a feasibility study on the Fort Regent Leisure Centre and to make recommendations which will provide the Island with a modern community sports and recreation centre to meet the needs of the local and tourist population, whilst being capable of hosting major international sporting events.

In particular, the consultants will be required to -

advise on the most modern and cost effective design to maximise both capital and future revenue budgets;

advise on the synergy between the area to be designated for sport and recreation and other areas of the Fort;

advise on the relationship between the proposed design and the existing swimming pool.

RQA carried out the feasibility study with two key partners, Saville Jones, Leisure Architects, and Alex Sayer Limited, Quantity Surveyors.

6. RQA produced a consultation report on 30th April 1997 and final report on 6th June 1997. The RQA report, which has been circulated to States' members and made available to members of the public, should be read in support of this report.

## **Background**

7. The decision to develop Fort Regent as a leisure complex was taken by the States in 1967. The swimming pool was built on the Glacis Field in 1971, the Piazza completed in 1976, the Gloucester Hall completed in 1978 and the Queen's Hall in 1988.

8. In its report to the States in December 1979, the Fort Regent Development Committee indicated that its objectives covered the following -

to provide covered sporting and other leisure facilities for all age groups in the Island;

to maintain and develop activities and exhibitions to be enjoyed by tourists;

to attract conferences and major public performances;

to preserve and enhance the military and historic atmosphere of the Fort.

It is because of this diversity of objectives that Fort Regent has been the subject of much criticism over the years. Conflicts continue to occur and cause friction between different sectors of the community because of the requirement to provide concerts, conferences, entertainment and events, as well as being the Island's premier pay and play sport and recreation centre. The Fort has never been able to satisfy fully any one market, and successive Committees over the years have unfortunately added to the problem, with ad hoc developments.

The Committee is determined to remove the present conflicts that exist and give it a clear strategic direction to meet the needs of the community into the new Millennium.

### **Access**

9. The RQA report clearly illustrates that the key to the future of Fort Regent is access from Snow Hill. When the cable car system ceased to operate in September 1991, entrance figures to the Fort began to decline seriously and this trend has never been reversed. The centre does not presently relate to the town centre, which means it does not attract casual visitors as most centres do. The proposal to install two high speed feature lifts will bring Fort Regent into the heart of the town and the community it

serves. The existing car park and an entrance at the west bastion will be retained.

## **The future**

10. Similar sport and leisure facilities in the United Kingdom, which were built in the 1970's, have either been demolished and reconstructed or totally refurbished, at considerable expense, to meet modern health and safety and leisure industry requirements. The original design brief resulted in poor use of space and the conflicts referred to earlier. It is uneconomical to manage and is not meeting the needs and demands of a modern, vibrant and active community.

Most communities the size of Jersey enjoy modern, economical pay and play sports facilities. Recent developments in Jersey, such as Les Quennevais and Springfield and the proposal for a leisure pool on the waterfront, are dictating the standards required. To do nothing with Fort Regent is not a realistic option - the Island deserves better.

11. The Committee supports the proposals contained in RQA's report to develop Fort Regent into the Jersey Health and Sports Centre with exceptional sport and recreation facilities for the very young to the very old, as well as a valued destination for people to visit informally. Free access to the building's public areas, and to the visitor centre via panoramic lifts, will provide Jersey with an operationally efficient centre and a unique destination for local people and for visitors to the Island.

The aims of the Jersey Health and Sports Centre will be to provide -

an internationally recognised sports centre of excellence, providing opportunities for sustainable development of play, sport and recreation for people of all ages and ability; this is to be the centre for coaching, offering courses from the foundation to excellence levels;

sports development advice and specialist services to athletes, sports people and the public at large on matters of fitness, health and performance, league and club management, training, event organisation and fund raising. In addition, the active for life programme will continue to be developed with general practitioners, the General Hospital and sporting organisations at all levels;

a unique venue on the Island and in the Channel Islands for major indoor participant events and with the possibility of accommodating occasional conferences in excess of 1,500 delegates;

an attractive visitor and information centre interpreting the history of the Fort with appropriate retail opportunities;

a valued destination for people to visit informally;

an efficiently managed centre used to its optimum capacity.

12. The proposals must be considered in the light of actual or proposed developments that are being considered elsewhere in the Island. The redevelopment of the Opera House and St. James' Church, together with the existing Arts Centre, should provide for the concert and theatre going public. The Committee is aware of proposals to develop a conference facility on the waterfront. In the event that a major conference centre is not built to cater for the one or two large conferences of between 1,500 to 2,000 delegates each year, (for which Fort Regent currently provides the venue) the design of the Jersey Health and Sports Centre allows for the Committee to continue to provide this facility, if required. Obviously this will retain one of the conflicts but the Committee takes the view that, if the Island requires such a facility which cannot be provided elsewhere, then Fort Regent should continue to be a venue for a small number of major conferences.



## Options

13. The development concepts illustrated in the RQA report have been carefully designed to meet the States' criteria of stewardship, economic, environmental and social objectives. The case for redevelopment is clearly proven in the RQA report.

The options the Committee has considered are detailed in the RQA report and can be summarised as follows -

Option 1      **Do nothing, but continue to operate as is, with or without new access**

No direct capital costs. Increased maintenance and operating costs, and significant further decreases in visitor numbers and income.

Capital £0-£1.1 million.

Revenue net increase in present deficit of £100k a year.

Option 2      **Modernise and refurbish the existing facilities, retaining the separate pool facility and dry sports in all or part of the Fort**

Lower capital costs compared with redesign, but still with high net revenue costs and diminishing visitor numbers and income. Local people's and visitors' expectations of higher standards not entirely met. Management costs for two separate old fashioned buildings very high. Vulnerable to competing facilities. Investment by any commercial partner very unlikely.

Capital £7.5m to £8.7m.

Revenue increase in present deficit of £30k a year.

Option 3.1 **Focus all indoor sports, wet and dry, into a redesigned interior, with improved access, circulation and operational control**

Straightforward concept which will be valuable to local people, visitors and the States, easy to market. Significant capital costs but with major reductions in net revenue costs annually. Potential increase in visitor numbers to the Centre, to a friendly building of high standards, inviting and easily accessible.

Capital £17m - £20.

Revenue - potential savings of £200-500k a year.

Option 3.2 **As above, with the present pool site used as a commercial opportunity, possibly for a sports hotel linked with the centre of excellence**

Potential for investment and operation of key facilities by the commercial sector with a prime site identified, subject to planning, and its own niche market(s). Could be sports hotel and restaurant of high standard and club entertainment. Car parking released for most convenient access. complemented by the original lifts.

Capital, excluding commercial areas, £17, - £20.5m.

Revenue - potential savings £200k to £500k a year.

## Capital

There should be a substantial benefit of capital from either the sale or lease of the site.

Option 2 illustrates that, even with an investment of capital of between £7.5 million to £8.7 million, management costs will still be high for two separate facilities and will result in an estimated continued revenue decrease of £30,000 a year, with no increased benefits.

Option 3.1 is the Committee's preferred option. Although the capital costs of between £17 million to £20 million are considerable, the design concepts allow for a phasing of the development over 52 months and, in addition, there will be an estimated revenue of between £200,000 and £500,000 a year.

## Conclusions

14. The Committee is seeking States' approval, in principle, for the redevelopment of Fort Regent into the Jersey Health and Sports Centre, as detailed in the RQA report.

The Fort has the potential to become a major asset to the Island. The proposals outlined provide a clear focus and identity for Fort Regent. It is to visualise what Fort Regent should be - a modern, vibrant, cost effective Jersey Health and Sports Centre, providing opportunities for sustainable development of play, sport and recreation for people of all ages and ability into the next century.

The States are recommended to support the proposition.

## Introduction

During the consultation process prior to lodging the report and proposition, the Sport, Leisure and Recreation Committee was requested to clarify and substantiate a number of issues, which have been summarised in this appendix to assist States members in the debate.

### 1. Summary of proof of demand - now, five years forward and beyond

Fort Regent is the Island's only community pay and play sport and recreation centre (Les Quennevais is a dual use - schools and public - facility).

#### 1.1 Annual visits - Fort Regent

|      |           |   |
|------|-----------|---|
| 1998 | 1,062,453 | (cable cars opened) accounted for 37 per cent of all admissions |
| 1990 | 1,057,572 |   |
| 1992 | 924,267   | (cable cars ceased) admissions fell by 12.5 per cent            |
| 1996 | 917,749   | (Les Quennevais opened)   |
| 1997 | 758,641   |   |

#### 1.2 Annual visits - Les Quennevais

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 1997 | 209,000 |
|------|---------|

#### 1.3 Total for Fort Regent and Les Quennevais

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 1997 | 967,641 |
|------|---------|

(With the proposed lift access from Snow Hill recommended in the RQA report, projected increase of admissions between 12 per cent - 20 per cent).

#### Points to note

65 per cent of participants are casual users - not members of clubs

47 per cent of residents use Fort Regent

31 per cent of users visit twice a week or more

60 active clubs and organisations use Fort Regent each week.

#### 1.4 Demographic influence

With a projected growing number of teenage school children and a dominant sector of the population aged 35 - 54, two of Sport, Leisure and Recreation's key markets, a five per cent growth of annual visits to Fort Regent (38,000) is expected over the next five years. These figures are separate to the benefits gained from installing a lift access.

#### Source

##### Touche Ross 1993

Jersey Residents Survey  
 Jersey Visitor Survey  
 Survey of Clubs and Associations  
 Fort Regent Survey

RQA Report 1997 - Facilities Planning Model - supply and demand

##### Sport, Leisure and Recreation

Fort Regent Market Research Survey 1995  
 Survey of Clubs and Associations 1997

States of Jersey Census 19962. Influence of other sport and recreation facilities on Fort Regent attendance figures2.1 Existing facilities

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Les Quennevais Sports Centre   | 1997 209,000 visits   |
| Indoor Badminton Centre  | caters for clubs  |
| Indoor Bowls Centre, Grainville  | full membership and waiting lists   |
| Jersey Bowl, St. Peter   | an additional leisure activity which inevitably has had some impact on leisure spending |
| Various health and fitness centres<br>e.g. Physique 2000<br>Club Carrefour | minimal impact, aimed at higher disposable income market.                               |

2.2 Proposed developments

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Les Ormes Tennis Centre | minimal impact   |
| Table Tennis Centre     | minimal impact   |
| Waterfront developments | there will be some impact. However, statistics in the United Kingdom show that fitness swimming is a growth area and the demand for a traditional pool and diving area will be retained. |

All the above developments will have an unquantifiable effect on the 'leisure pound', the money people spend on leisure

pursuits. With the proposed development and an increase in a more active population, Fort Regent should be able to maintain and grow its market share.

**The key to growth is access and modern facilities.**

3. Details of investigations into alternative strategies

3.1 Relocation of facilities elsewhere

1995 Jersey Electricity Company Queen's Road site (utilising existing redundant power station building) - £15 million plus land purchase costs.

(Feasibility Study,  
Nigel Biggar and Partners)

1997 Unspecified green field site - £18 million plus land purchase costs.

(Feasibility Study,  
Nigel Biggar and Partners)

3.2 Additional consideration of alternative sites

Land purchase costs

Environmental impact - large building mass.

Traffic generation.

The Planning and Environment Committee has reviewed other site options and has concluded that Fort Regent is the most appropriate site for a community sport and recreation centre.

Fort Regent is in a central location in St. Helier, which is the largest population centre in the Island. Access to Fort Regent for office based and other workers/employees in St. Helier offers significant growth potential.

### 3.3 Support to parishes and local clubs and associations £ for £ grants and loans

This is a cost effective means of provision, but generally does not cater for the casual pay and play participant.

The Committee has allocated over £3.8 million since 1993 in £ for £ provision for local facilities, which represents an investment of over £7 million in new or refurbished club and association facilities.

Some examples are -

- International five court badminton centre
- International indoor bowls centre
- Proposed centres which are at planning stage
- Indoor tennis centre
- Table tennis centre

### 3.4 Options for Fort Regent

#### 3.4.1 Option 1 - do nothing

Escalating maintenance and operating costs. Serious deterioration of facilities resulting in loss of public support and confidence, leading to decreases in visitor numbers and income.

#### Source

- RQA report 1997
- Alex Sayer Quantity Surveyors - study of Fort Regent 1997
- Sport, Leisure and Recreation Customer Survey 1995.

#### 3.4.2 Option 2 - modernise and refurbish existing facilities, retaining separate pool and dry sport facilities

Retains high management and operational costs for two separate old fashioned buildings.

Vulnerable to modern competing facilities.



Requires capital investment of £7.5 million to £8.7 million to meet health and safety and places of public entertainments requirements.

Source

Pearce Roogier (Surveyors) Limited Glazing report 1994  
Hannam Associates Structural Survey of Swimming Pool 1995.  
Alex Sayer Quantity Surveyors - study of Fort Regent 1997.  
RQA report 1997.

3.4.3 Option 3 - focus all indoor sports, wet and dry, into a redesigned interior

will provide a modern building to high standards, inviting and easily accessible. Reduction in revenue costs, potential increase in visitor numbers.

Capital costs £17 million to £20 million

Revenue saving £200,000 to £500,000 a year.

Source

RQA report 1997  
Alex Sayer Quantity Surveyor - study of Fort Regent 1997  
Senior States Surveyor 1997.

4. Involvement of the private sector

4.1 Current situation

Only the core provision at Fort Regent is not privatised or contracted out.

The community sports hall, swimming pool, health and fitness and activity rooms are directly managed by Sport, Leisure and Recreation. Everything else, children's play, catering, skateboard, game machines and shops are contracted out.

Discussions have been held with a leading United Kingdom leisure management company, which operates a significant number of leisure centres in the United Kingdom, on behalf of local authorities.

The following conclusions were arrived at by the company in consideration of Fort Regent -

The Fort requires significant capital investment before they would register an interest. They would not be prepared to provide the level of capital investment required.

The company would consider a Service Level Agreement with Sport, Leisure and Recreation, to provide training and support to best industry standards in operational efficiency. This proposed partnership concept is currently being developed.

#### 5. Summary information

There are over 2,400 sports centres and 1,700 swimming pools in the United Kingdom. All the first generation centres other than Fort Regent have been substantially refurbished, redesigned or rebuilt.

A review of the 441 local councils across the United Kingdom reveals that planned investment into United Kingdom local authority leisure facilities in 1998 is up 470 per cent on 1997 figures (£3.2 billion compared to £1 billion last year).

These include -

432 leisure centre and sports hall developments comprising 237 new builds and 195 refurbishments;

192 pool developments, comprising 92 new builds and 100 refurbishments;

183 health and fitness centres, comprising 11 new builds and 72 refurbishments;

63 indoor and outdoor children's play facilities.