

# STATES OF JERSEY



## LA COLLETTE LOW RISE: PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE – PETITION (P.78/2015) – COMMENTS

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Presented to the States on 7th September 2015  
by the Council of Ministers

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STATES GREFFE

## COMMENTS

*This Comment is made by the Council of Ministers, excluding the Minister for Planning and Environment, in the interests of maintaining an appropriate separation from the planning processing, for which the Minister is ultimately responsible.*

### **Introduction**

The redevelopment of La Collette low-rise flats, which are currently in a very poor state of repair and failing decent homes standards, and replacing them with modern and well-designed dwellings, is a positive development which should be welcomed.

This development will result in much-needed high-quality affordable housing, with an accompanying increase and improvement in the open space, which is supported by the majority of tenants.

- A counter-petition organised by the La Collette Low Rise Association collected 48 signatories from residents of the 59 low-rise flats, expressing full support for the development (see attached **Appendix**); and
- A recent residents' survey found that 73% of residents were not satisfied with the condition of their home, and that 77% did not use the open space at all.

Andium Homes have been tasked by the Assembly to upgrade and deliver new housing, and should be supported as they continue to make very positive steps toward achieving this.

On this site, they will ensure that open and amenity space increases – by over 700 m<sup>2</sup>, or nearly 14% – and can be better used and enjoyed as part of the development. The existing open green space is poorly located and difficult to access for young children, surrounded as it is by roads and residents' parking. The development will instead provide an underground car park, freeing up valuable surface area which can instead be given over to amenity space. In addition, all new dwellings will feature private and good-sized balconies.

As to density levels, this will be considered as part of the planning application, but from a housing design and liveability perspective, the scheme is of a very high standard.

The current 1960s design scheme is recognised in a States of Jersey Crime impact statement as enabling anti-social behaviour, with open stairwells and resident areas fully accessible by the Public; and the proposed development is supported by the States of Jersey Police, as it promotes safer, secure tenant spaces, with more appropriate visual surveillance of open spaces from resident units.

Furthermore, Transport and Technical Services are supportive, with sufficient drainage capacity on the site, and a location that has excellent opportunities for access via sustainable transport modes – and to maximise this potential, various measures are proposed, including bus shelters, cycle parking, the relocation of the pedestrian crossing, and support for green travel initiatives.

It is also noted that several local commercial premises are presently empty, and so a sustainable increase in density could improve the wider local community benefit by supporting local businesses.

The Island Plan was only recently adopted by the Assembly. This specifically identified La Collette low-rise flats as being the site for up to 100 additional affordable homes. Andium Homes' proposals are for an additional 88 units, and is therefore an important component of the Plan.

Furthermore, the Assembly has recently approved the Strategic Plan, outlining an ambition to regenerate the town of St. Helier – and the redevelopment of this site will support these aims by bringing much-needed improvements to this area, including enhancing and improving the current open space provision.

This is the balance that we must strike – more homes that can be better enjoyed, protecting and enhancing our open and green spaces. This is tremendously important.

We only need to look to other jurisdictions, and to where Jersey is now, to see what happens where we do not act decisively – people live in increasingly unsuitable accommodation, prices rise because of insufficient supply, and necessary improvements in amenity space do not happen.

### **Conclusion**

The Planning Applications Committee is more than capable of making a fully informed decision on this application, considering the detailed evidence and submissions that have been made, but it is important to be clear that the development has many merits – improved homes, increased usability of open space, better parking provision, improved design to avoid anti-social behaviour, and better amenities. Importantly, the proposed development is fully in accord with the Island Plan and has the firm support of the residents.

Indeed, overall improvements in the area are important and necessary, and this development should not be seen in isolation or contrary to an overall need to improve the surrounding neighbourhood.

**For these reasons, the Council of Ministers, excluding the Minister for Planning and Environment, urges States Members to reject the Proposition.**

### **Links to Planning Application, including Counter-Petition and other submissions:**

Current Application (2015):

<https://www.mygov.je/Planning/Pages/PlanningApplicationDocuments.aspx?s=1&r=PP/2015/0747>

Previous Application (2014):

<https://www.mygov.je/Planning/Pages/PlanningApplicationDetail.aspx?s=1&r=PP/2014/1872>

**APPENDIX**

**COUNTER-PETITION**

**La Collette Low Rise Association**

“Re: Petition in support of La Collette Flats planning development

Dear Planning Minister

Enclosed please find a petition of signatures that are in support of the redevelopment plans for La Collette Flats Low Rise.

We wish to express our desire to not live any longer than we have already done so in these substandard homes, and ask that you do not delay the plans going in front of the planning board from August to October.

We understand the need to be fair to all party’s who are either for or against the planning development of this site, however we feel that Deputy Labby has made unjust statements with regards to the “majority” of tenants not wishing for planning to go ahead and not having been informed about the plans, despite what was then known as Housing sending out leaflets informing all tenants of their intentions as far back as 2010. We also feel the only people he has spoken with are those that are against the plans for their own personal reasons i.e. not wanting to down size as they would have too, or not wishing to live around a building site while work commences, and would like to politely point out that we too have had to live around building sites while firstly the disabled living flats were transformed and then while the high rise was refurbished. If Deputy Labby was to speak too as claimed the “majority” of residents rather than those that do not live in the low rise then maybe he would have a clearer understanding of the majority of residents living in these appalling conditions feelings and reasoning’s as to why they are so desperate for the plans to pass as soon as possible, hopefully preventing families having to go through yet another winter in the substandard accommodation they have no choice but to call home.

Thank you, for your time and understanding with regards to this matter.

**COUNTER PETITION**

We the undersigned are in full support of the La Collette Low Rise Flats planning development, we wish for the development to go ahead as soon as possible and do not want the planning committee postponing the decision making of the estate until October 2015.

NAME	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS
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