

**LA ROCCO APARTMENTS, LA PULENTE,
ST. BRELADE: DEVELOPMENT**

**Lodged au Greffe on 17th February 1998
by the Tourism Committee**



STATES OF JERSEY

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Planning and Environment Committee to reconsider its decision to reject an application for a proposed building extension at La Rocco Apartments, La Pulente, St Brelade, a property which is situated on land designated as Green Zone on the Island Map 1-87, as amended, and instead to grant permission for an extension to provide six self-catering units specifically designed for disabled persons.

TOURISM COMMITTEE

REPORT

1. Introduction

This report and proposition recommends that an exception be made to the Green Zone policy, and that the States request the Planning and Environment Committee to grant planning permission for a proposed extension to La Rocco Apartments at La Pulente, St. Brelade to provide additional self-catering accommodation for the disabled.

2. The site

The site is located to the east of La Route de la Pulente and is set back against the hillside just below Le Mont de la Pulente (see location plan - drawing No. 529/1).

The existing building is a three-storey building, with the third floor contained within a pitched/dormered roof. The building presently accommodates 13 self-catering units plus owners/managers accommodation, and now has a total floorspace of approximately 7,780 square feet. Vehicular access to the site is from La Route de la Pulente to the west.

The site of the proposed extension is on the north east side of the existing building, lying within a semi-circular hollow formed by the existing rising hillside to the north and east and the existing hillside and building to the south/south west.

3. Proposal

The current proposal is to erect a two-storey extension which would be set back from the rear elevation of the existing building and would have a pitched roof with a height just below that of the existing. The extension would provide an additional six self-catering units specifically designed for the use of disabled persons.

The additional floorspace area on two floors would comprise 4,200 square feet, which represents an increase of 54 per cent over the existing.

4. Background

In December 1995 the then Planning and Environment Committee refused permission for a proposed extension to provide eight additional conventional self-catering units in this location on the grounds that the proposal would involve an unacceptable extension of existing commercial premises in the Green Zone, contrary to the provisions of Policy CO4 of the approved Island Plan.

The Planning and Environment Committee subsequently received a request to reconsider the application and, on 16th May 1996 visited the site to hear representation from the then President of the Tourism Committee Senator Shenton on behalf of the applicant. The Committee also viewed profiles which had been erected on site showing a slightly reduced scale of extension to provide six additional self-catering units.

Having further reconsidered the matter at its meeting on 23rd May 1996, the Planning and Environment Committee decided to support the revised proposal and to submit a report and proposition to the States recommending that an exception be made to the approved Green Zone policies.

On 8th October 1996 the proposition was lodged au Greffe and was due to be debated by the States on 5th November.

Consideration of the proposition was deferred in the House at the request of Senator Horsfall who stated that he had received a request from the National Trust (the day before) for the debate to be deferred so that they could prepare a report on the matter. The National Trust had been advised in writing of the Planning and Environment Committees intention to refer the matter to the States at the beginning of the previous June. Their previous objections had also been outlined in the report and proposition.

On 31st October the then President of the Planning and Environment Committee decided to further defer the report and proposition pending further consultation with the Tourism and Policy and Resources Committees regarding the law and policies on change of use of tourism accommodation.

In February 1997 the newly constituted Planning and Environment Committee decided not to support the proposal and to withdraw the proposition.

A further similar planning application, albeit slightly revised to accommodate the needs of the disabled, was submitted to the Planning and Environment Committee on 11th August 1997.

On 27th August 1997 the National Trust for Jersey confirmed that it had no objection to this latest proposal.

On 8th September 1997 following site visits and a presentation from the owners of La Rocco Apartments the Tourism Committee decided to support the application to construct six self-catering apartments for the disabled.

Permission was refused by the Planning and Environment Committee on 14th October 1997. The grounds for refusal were the same as for the original application. It is this application which forms the subject of this proposition.

5. The Island Plan and Tourism

The Island Plan recognises that Tourism is a major contributor to the Island's economy.

Policy CM1 declares general support for the tourism industry and advises a flexible response to the changing needs of the industry.

The following are direct quotes from the previously constituted Planning and Environment Committees earlier proposition:

Landscape impact

“The proposed development would not have a significant impact on the appearance of the landscape in this area. Because of its siting relative to the surrounding hillside and existing building, the proposed extension would effectively not be visible from the north, south and east, and would only be visible when viewed directly from the west.”

“The applicant has previously carried out improvements to the premises and provided high quality self-catering units, and the Tourism Committee strongly supports the provision of further quality units, especially at a time when large numbers of bedspaces and sites are being lost to the industry. Whilst the tourism issue is not a reason in itself to over-ride approved Green Zone policies, it is relevant in conjunction with the above.”

6. Self-catering on the Island

Currently the Island has self-catering accommodation for 1,211. Whilst demand is high, and increasing, the volume is small when compared to the conventional stock of 17,752 beds + 1,250 campsite beds.

In those premises registered under the Tourism Law there is only one self-catering unit specifically designed for the disabled. The proprietors of La Rocco Apartments have seen a market opportunity in providing accommodation specifically designed for disabled persons. Creating such apartments involves the proprietor in greater expense than in the development of conventional self-catering this is due to the increased size required for access, and design requirements for bathrooms and kitchens.

Drawings for the new apartments have been audited and approved by the Centre for Accessible Environments, an organisation based in London which is dedicated to assisting in the design of proper facilities for disabled people to ensure that facilities really do meet their needs. The designs incorporate all

the amendments which were suggested in the Centre's 26 page report.

7. The Tourism Committee case

The Tourism Committee believes that the application should be supported because -

The previous Planning and Environment Committee intended to support the application and to refer the matter to the States as, having regard to all the circumstances, it believed that it was an appropriate exception to the Green Zone policy.

The impact on the area is minimal.

There is now no resistance to the extension by the National Trust for Jersey, which was the main reason that the original proposition was deferred.

The Les Mielles Sub-Committee has raised no objections.

The concern regarding the issue of control of Change of Use (which was the second reason why the previous proposition was deferred) has now been resolved with a change to the Use Classes Order.

Self-catering is in short supply on the Island and specifically there is no special provision for the disabled.

The current premises have been the subject of continual improvement and the proprietor has successfully operated a self-catering business for a number of years. The current application has been justified by the proprietor in terms of demand and viability.

Conclusion

Having regard to all the circumstances of the case the Tourism Committee firmly believes that permission should be granted to the proprietor of La Rocco Apartments for the building of an extension to his property to provide six self-catering apartments specially designed for the disabled.