

Written Submission from member of the public re Future Hospital Site

16 October 2020

Good evening,

The news of the location of the new hospital at Overdale has been met with a certain amount of despair in our household for so many different reasons. We are just settling into retirement providing day care for our Grandson and thinking all was well with the world confident that no one in their right mind would consider placing a hospital in such an inaccessibly site. To hear our Constable say that he was "over the moon" with the idea was incredibly hurtful. Surely he is supposed to represent us as well. Suddenly we were both looking at property online, anywhere out of St Helier but soon discovered that there is very little available and really we do love our little house which was built by my father in law in 1951.

Living near Overdale it is blindingly obvious that it is not a suitable site. To place a hospital at the top of an incredibly steep hill is just crazy. I am reasonable fit and yet I still find it a challenge to walk up from town. Westmount and Tower Road are always the first roads to shut in wintery conditions and in the last significant snow to hit Jersey, Tower Road and Westmount were closed for a couple of days. As soon as there is any ice on the road Tower Road becomes a skating ring and there are frequent crashes. The roads round here are already far too busy. This was evident this week with the temporary traffic lights outside Pet Cabin on St John's Road, the traffic quickly tailed back all the way up Tower Road and past the junction with Westmount Road. These roads are totally unsuitable for heavy traffic and are not coping now let alone when a hospital arrives on the scene. There is little room for improvement having cemeteries each side of the road and houses all along St John's Road.

There has been hardly any mention of the Crematorium other than "**The presence of a crematorium adjacent to the site is, however, of concern and may be considered as having a negative impact on the patient environment.**" Is the Crematorium going to be moved as per Constable Taylors ridiculous suggestion? The building work will be seriously detrimental to the normal functioning of the Crematorium. In normal times, ie before Covid, cars from the Crematorium parked all the way along Westmount Road, frequently causing blockages. There is not enough parking now, where are these cars going to park both during all the road rebuilding and afterwards when I guess the road will need to be kept clear. I doubt there will be room in the new multi storey car park as it appears it will be mainly full of staff cars.

I was horrified to hear the plans to rebuild Westmount Road. I can imagine how the home owners felt to hear the news that their houses are vanishing and the impact it would have on others nearby. The hill itself is has a long history of landslides and instability so will probably end up costing far more than predicted. It has already been acknowledged that it will be challenging and complex. You have the rockface behind the flats at Westmount Quarry which cost Dandara more than they envisaged to stabilise and may or may not survive heavy building work around it. Directly opposite the Bowling Green there was a massive landslide which closed the road for ages and it is supported by a wall of gabion baskets filled with rock, covered now with plant life. There is also in that area a copper mine going into the hillside which was used as an air raid shelter at the start of World War 2. The hair pin bend that is going to be rebuilt is directly above the quarry face behind West Park Flats, this is another rock face that has needed extensive work to stabilise and the flats are incredibly close to the rockface if problems are caused by heavy building work. The hill is also very historic being the site of the town

gallows but more significantly the gathering point for the Jersey Militia under Major Pierson before the battle of Jersey. The beautiful and historic Jersey Bowling Club will be a tremendous loss to the island and to have it replaced by a road is really soul destroying. It will be hard to find them a site on a par with what they have already. The road construction is over 1km in length and will also impact on Peoples Park which will lose all its parking and probably a section of the actual park along Westmount Road to enable widening. Peoples Park is in danger of becoming an island in the middle of a major traffic system necessary to support the Overdale site. You might have saved the Park Simon, but it will be seriously diminished.

The woodlands surrounding Overdale are a very rich and diverse habitat blessed with much wildlife. I walk frequently through Overdale and into the woods above Val Andre and have been privileged this year to encounter a buzzard flying low through the trees, a branch full of fledgling Jays and numerous other different birds. It is part of a squirrel corridor over to the woods at Bellozanne. I live at Richelieu Park and am frequently visited by squirrels from Overdale. An evening walk is a delight due to the numerous bats. There are many significant trees surrounding Overdale, a Monkey Puzzle tree, a number of fairly large Oak trees and some spectacular Pine trees. They will either be lost during the building work or significantly impacted by it. This woodland is so important for St Helier and should be preserved at all cost. Much has been made of the tree planting on the North Coast whilst established trees providing a green lung for St Helier seem to have little importance. The woods at Westmount, a Grade three protected space, provide a wonderful green backdrop to St Helier and future generations will not thank us if we allow it to be forever damaged by building a hospital which will dominate the woods and change the vista forever.

I live in close proximity to Overdale, just off Tower Road at the beginning of Richelieu Park, within 100 metres of the proposed site so the building work and the noise associated with it will seriously impact on our lives as will the future operation of the hospital. This I could live with if I felt it was an appropriate site for a hospital but for so many reasons is not. I fear greatly the costs involved in building it here and in building over a kilometre of road to service it. It sounds perfectly feasible that this hospital could cost not far short of a billion pounds which is absolutely ridiculous when the original costs for Gloucester Street site was less than half the price. We are a small island, how can we justify such expense particularly at a very challenging time financially, it could end up crippling us. Probably by the time it is built we will no longer have the finances to run it and staff it appropriately.

The announcement of Overdale as the preferred site rather than allowing the States to consider both sites equally is an attempt to influence the decision rather than allowing the peoples representatives to come to their own decisions after considering all the facts and been given the opportunity to question and challenge the Ministers concerned. The decision has already been made, the States are merely being asked to rubber stamp it. My belief in the islands democracy has taken yet another hit.

I ask that you please do try to look at both sites equally without influence, the costs involved and the impact each would have on the surrounding area. Neither site is really appropriate, both have been discounted in the past but choose you must.

Kind Regards

Pippa Dale

Reply from Senator Moore

Good morning Mrs Dale,

Thank you for taking the time to set out your thoughts. There is a scrutiny review of this decision making process and with your agreement I would like to use your letter as a submission please? We can if you prefer remove your name.

Please could you confirm this and I will forward it to officers for recording.

As you will be aware the planning inspector raised similar issues with Overdale as a site and this application would have to go through that inspection again.

Kind regards

Kristina

Good Morning Senator Moore,

Thank you so much for replying so promptly.

Please do use my letter as a submission and I am happy for my name to be on it.

I am aware that the planning inspector has raised similar issues about Overdale as a site which is why I thought it would not be put forward and particularly not as a preferred choice. I know that it will have to go through the inspection process again but now there is incredible political momentum behind this decision which will put tremendous pressure on the planning process. According to the time-line in the Site Evaluation Report (4.8) the intention is to demolish and clear the buildings on the Overdale site, demolish the Bowling Club and residential properties and build the road, subject to planning permission before the hospital at Overdale is fully approved. That puts a lot of pressure on planning's final decision.

- Demolition of Existing Overdale hospital suite and residential buildings site and Bowling Club
- New Westmount Road and car parking along St Aubin's Road at People's Park
- Main Hospital works.

Kind Regards

Pippa Dale