

STATES OF JERSEY



SAMARÈS NURSERY SITE, ST. CLEMENT: REMOVAL FROM DRAFT ISLAND PLAN – PETITION

**Lodged au Greffe on 20th April 2010
by the Connétable of St. Clement**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Minister for Planning and Environment to remove Samarès Nursery from the draft Island Plan as a potential development site.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. CLÉMENT

REPORT

Members can be in no doubt that many residents of St. Clément are becoming more and more distressed by the development that is occurring in the Parish, and even more so by the totally inappropriate style of development that is being permitted in some cases. La Rue du Jambart is a very sad example of a traditional country lane being ruined by urban standards being imposed on a rural community.

St. Clément is often spoken about these days as an urban Parish. Despite the excessive development that has taken place within its boundaries over the past years, it remains culturally and, in much of its area, physically, rural. This proposition is designed to help to keep it that way.

I am asking the States to request the Minister for Planning and Environment to remove Samarès Nursery from the list of Category A Housing Sites in the draft Island Plan on the grounds that it is not necessary, it overburdens a Parish which has already contributed more than its fair share of the housing provision for the Jersey population, that by doing so the Minister reneges on his promise not to allow major development without the approval of the relevant Connétable and that a more suitable and appropriate use could be found for the site.

It is not necessary

This is a simple matter of mathematics. Between now and 2018 the Minister anticipates an overall demand for homes of 4,000 in number compared to an estimated supply of 4,625. The Plan is therefore proposing an oversupply by some 15½% and this before taking into account the additional homes that would be provided in the scheme to support Parish vitality in the northern and central Parishes.

Under Policy H1 on page 250 of the draft plan the Minister looks to the 7 sites mentioned to yield some 200 homes in total of which, I imagine, some 100/150 would be on Samarès Nursery. By removing this site from the list, the total anticipated **oversupply** of homes would be 475/525. This oversupply ignores the requirement for new homes in the northern and central Parishes which need new development, particularly for their young people, to keep their schools, community centres and communities viable. When this demand is taken into account the draft Island Plan, if unamended, will create between 600 and 1,000 homes which the Minister concedes are not required during the lifetime of the Plan.

Overburdening of St. Clément

It is often not realised that St. Clément is Jersey's smallest Parish with a land area of only 4.2 km², some 50% less than St. Mary, the second smallest, which covers some 6.5 km².

On the other hand, St. Clément is home to 9% of Jersey's people, with a population of 8,196 giving a density of 1,951 persons per km² compared with St. Mary, which has a population of 1,591 and a density of 245 persons per km².

From the following table, taken from the 2001 Census (the latest available), it can be seen that despite being the smallest Parish by some margin, the density level in St. Clément is second only to St. Helier.

Parish Population and Density

Parish	Population 2001 Census	Percent of total	Area (km ²)	Population Density (persons per km ²)
St. Helier	28,310	32	8.6	3,292
St. Saviour	12,491	14	9.3	1,343
St. Brelade	10,134	12	12.8	792
St. Clement	8,196	9	4.2	1,951
Grouville	4,702	5	7.8	603
St. Lawrence	4,702	5	9.5	495
St. Peter	4,293	5	11.6	370
St. Ouen	3,803	4	15.0	254
St. Martin	3,628	4	9.9	366
Trinity	2,718	3	12.3	221
St. John	2,618	3	8.7	301
St. Mary	1,591	2	6.5	245
JERSEY	87,186	100	116.2	750

This I think proves my assertion that this Parish has done more than its fair share in housing the local population and it is no wonder that St. Clément wishes to resist any further significant development.

During my election campaign in the autumn of 2008 it was reaffirmed to me that most Parishioners are opposed to further large-scale development in St. Clément, and this applies to residents from all parts of the Parish including our more urban areas.

The Minister's promise

I have been reassured by the Minister's regularly-made promise in public that he would not allow large-scale development on sites unless he had the support of the relevant Parish Connétable. Members can be in no doubt that on this occasion my support will not be forthcoming.

A Parish Assembly was held on 8th February 2005, when a proposal was put forward to provide something like 25 units of Parish sheltered housing on the Samarès Nursery site, on the understanding that the Assembly would support the provision of 125 additional houses on the site.

I was at that meeting, which filled the Parish Hall almost to overflowing, and the discussion was indeed lively and the resulting vote was almost unanimously against the proposal.

There has been no change in the mood of Parishioners, and the sheltered housing/retirement home scheme comprising of some 40 units will now be going

ahead on Field 274, La Rue de Lourderie, which the States approved for rezoning a year or so ago. St. Clément is not ducking its social responsibilities.

Other uses

It is inevitable that despite the size of the site, it will be claimed that it will never again be used for horticultural or agricultural purposes. And while there is “hope value” for housing development this might well be the case. But this depends on the economic situation at any given time. With food prices around the world rising, it might be that in the not-too-distant future we will be looking for areas such as this to sustain our own population, and increased food prices may well make Samarès Nursery viable gain. In fact that time might already have arrived.

In October 2009, the United Nations told us that to feed the world’s increasing population, food production must increase by 50% over the next 20 years. From my own knowledge and experience, it is certain that Jersey growers are ready to play their part in the expansion of this vital industry. It would be verging on the irresponsible to destroy potential sources of food to create homes which, according to the Minister’s own figures, are not required.

Despite the perceived wisdom that there is no demand for glasshouses these days, the facts show exactly the opposite. There is an unfulfilled demand for glass for the growing of flowers, plugs and even potatoes – growers were openly advertising towards the end of last year as they were unable to find sufficient land for their 2010 crops and some were even considering planting outside of the Island. This is crazy when land such as Samarès Nursery on which relatively modern glasshouses exist, built in the late 1990s, are lying idle. And to compound the nonsense, Planning now have to deal with applications to create new glasshouses in other places!!

The site is in private ownership; and whatever happens there is for the owner to decide provided it is consistent with States policies. Being situated where it is, close to Le Marais high-rise, many flats and apartments without gardens and recent developments with postage-stamp gardens, the demand for allotments in this area is bound to grow. It is recognised that some investment will be needed to create allotments on this site – as it will be for any site near the urban area – but I suggest that this would be a much more appropriate and acceptable use than creating a 100/150 homes, which, I repeat, we do not need. Indeed, Planning’s policy (or lack of it) on garden-grabbing is going to increase the demand for allotments as more and more gardens have concrete poured over this important private amenity and growing space.

Site of archaeological interest

The area around Samarès Nursery is almost certainly a site of archaeological interest, as is confirmed in the draft Island Plan. In living memory, residents are aware of a significant number of standing stones being on this site before the original glasshouses were erected, some of which were destroyed, but it is understood that the largest were buried intact in the centre of the glasshouse development. Ideally, these monuments should be found and if possible re-erected. It is probable that this area has important archaeology from the Neolithic and Bronze Age period.

Ground conditions and flooding

This site forms part of Samarès marsh and therefore the ground is soft and the water table high. Overdevelopment in the area has already caused flooding issues, particularly in the most recent development, Clos Lemprière, which is adjacent to Samarès Nursery.

It is also suspected that this overdevelopment and the additional surface water generated has already been the cause of the undermining of La Rue du Maupertuis, which has collapsed twice during the past 12 months. More development in the area means more surface water entering the marshy area and threatening the integrity of the road network.

The owner of one field also adjacent to the proposed site is extremely concerned that the surface water drainage from his field, which currently goes through the glasshouse site, will have nowhere to go and will back-up and eventually breach the bank, threatening to flood any new homes on the proposed site.

Additionally, the main surface water drain from the Nursery flows into the canal running through Samarès Manor Gardens, a proposed Site of Special Interest. If the Nursery is developed, the drainage will be insufficient and cause flooding to the Gardens, nearby housing and the St. Clément golf course, and perhaps threaten the Manor itself.

Summary

I believe the proposition should be adopted because –

- As the Draft Island Plan looks to create more homes than are required, zoning of the site is not necessary.
- The Parish of St. Clément has already done more than its fair share in providing homes for the Island's population.
- The Minister for Planning and Environment has promised that he would not bring forward for zoning any sites which did not have the approval of the relevant Connétable.
- There is an unsatisfied demand and need for agricultural land and horticultural facilities.
- The site is one of important archaeological interest.
- The area is already overdeveloped and the increased threat of flooding in the area is real and significant.
- Development will threaten the integrity of a proposed site of special interest.
- The topography of the area does not lend itself to more large-scale development.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from the adoption of this proposition.



Map B.3: Samarès Nursery, La Grande Route de St. Clément, St. Clément

