

STATES OF JERSEY



FIRST TOWER PARK: PROTECTION FROM STATES' DEVELOPMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 13th July 2020
by the Connétable of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Council of Ministers to remove First Tower Park, St. Helier, from its short list of potential sites for Jersey's new hospital

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

It is regrettable that the Government of Jersey does not appear to understand the value of public parks despite the many debates that have taken place in recent years and despite decisions by the States Assembly over the years not only to protect those parks which we have but also to add to the quality and quantity of public green space in the Island.

In putting forward a short list of potential sites for Jersey's new hospital that includes People's Park, the Government is attempting to disregard the decision of the States Assembly taken last year on 13th February ([P.5/2019, Amendment](#)) which specifically rules this out. It may be argued that it is 'the process' that leads the Government to do this, but I would argue that this latest round of site selection in the expensive saga of Jersey's new hospital project has already failed, unless, of course, this is but a cynical ploy to divert public attention away from other sites on the list which have not already been ruled out by the legislature.

So much for People's Park, which cannot be left on the new hospital short list because the States has so decreed.

However, tens of thousands of Islanders will react with consternation to the Government's latest decision to put First Tower Park, St. Helier, on their new short list of sites. Among those affected will be –

- people who live in the First Tower area,
- children who attend First Tower school,
- worshippers at St. Andrew's Church,
- people who value Jersey's rich archaeological heritage (the Ville es Nouveaux Neolithic dolmen),
- people whose loved ones are remembered by the many memorial trees planted around the park,
- people who use First Tower Park for their daily exercise and recreation.

As with the reappearance of People's Park on the new hospital short list, the inclusion of this public park may be designed to whip up a storm of public protest that will make people who object to the other sites on the short list struggle to get their voices of objection heard. An alternative reading of the situation is that the decision to consider First Tower Park ripe for development shows a breath-taking lack of understanding of the importance of public green space in urban communities.

I am not going to rehearse here the arguments which are set out in the Island Plan on why public parks matter, or the principles to which the Government ought to subscribe as it has signed up to them, for I do not believe that there is a realistic prospect of Jersey's new hospital being constructed on the site of First Tower Park; however, I attach as an **Appendix** to this Proposition my comments on the value of People's Park which are relevant here (P.5/2109 Amd), while the [Hansard report](#) of the debate is also worth reading.

It should go without saying that the Parish of St. Helier has not been consulted about this matter.

I ask that the States Assembly reaffirms its commitment to protecting the Island's public parks by requesting the Council of Ministers to remove First Tower Park, St. Helier, from its short list of potential sites for Jersey's new hospital.

Financial and manpower implications

There are none, other than the likelihood of saving any further costs involved in an abortive site investigation process as far as this public park is concerned.

Extract from the Report of the Planning Inspector

High level assessment of the alternative sites

370. The final alternative I considered was Peoples Park. I am well aware that this site option is locally controversial. I am also aware that, whilst scoring well as an option in earlier assessment work, it was withdrawn from consideration by the then Health Minister, in the light of public opposition. In pure Planning terms, the location is sustainable, accessible and very close to the existing hospital. The key Planning issues would centre around the complete loss of an existing open space, which is also a Grade 3 Listed space. A case could be made that the public benefit of the new hospital justified these losses and the existing hospital site could, in part, provide compensatory new park provision. Its development for a new hospital would significantly change the townscape in this part of St. Helier, although the West Mount escarpment would mitigate some of the effects and impacts of large buildings on this site. There would be some adverse impacts on residential amenities, views and vistas and the settings of Listed buildings. This option, along with all the others, raises Island Plan tensions and challenges.