

APPLICATION P/2010/1717

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED SHELTERED HOUSING AT FIELD 622, CLOS DE LA CROUTE, ST. OUEN.

DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE INQUIRY INSPECTOR, MR DAVID BUSHBY.

The statement considers the consultation process between the Parish of St. Ouen and Parishioners to the proposed re-zoning of Field 622

The first public consultation relating to development in Field 622, took place at St. Ouen's Parish Hall on the 6th February 2009. This was not a Parish Assembly but attended by invited residents living adjacent to or close by Field 622.

Taking into account that the initial approach regarding the legacy and use thereof was made in 2007, it is surprising that it took until 2009 for any public consultation to occur.

Mr Thorne in his submission dated of 16th April 2013, states under Para 18 'there has been full consultation with the parishioners via Parish Assemblies'¹. It is interesting to note that Mr Thorne infers from the word 'assemblies' that Parishioners have had more than one assembly meeting to discuss such an important issue. The reality is that the application to re-zone Field 622 has only ever been discussed at the Parish Assembly of 17th November 2009.

The vote taken at the Parish Assembly of 17th November 2009, proved extremely controversial. Again Mr Thorne states 'the agendas and minutes illustrates that the Parish and Parishioners are in support of the application'. This statement does not reflect the highly inappropriate and unprofessional management of the meeting, which produced a number of letters of complaint to the Constable concerning the manner in which the vote to accept the proposition to re-zone Field 622 was taken, with one well documented example from a non-parishioner at the meeting attached hereto². This would suggest that support for the application is tenuous.

Furthermore, following the Parish Assembly held on February 23rd 2010, a formal complaint and threat of legal action as to the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2010, has been submitted to the Constable. Also attached to this submission is a copy of correspondence with the Constable highlighting the difficulties being experienced securing copies of minutes of Parish assemblies³. The manner in which the Parish assemblies were conducted was the subject of an exchange of correspondence with the Attorney General.

¹ Proposed Sheltered Housing Accommodation, Field 622. Initial submission to the public inquiry.

² Correspondence from Mr Robin Barthorp

³ Correspondence to the Constable Ken Vibert dated 22nd June 2010

The Constable, subsequent to the vote taken on the 17th November 2009, submitted applications to re-zone Field 622 lodged 'au greffe' on the 19th April & 22nd November 2010. Both submissions were withdrawn by the Constable, following complaints made by myself to the States Greffe, that the supporting plans highlighted Field 622 in its entirety for re-zoning and the documents submitted provided no details of the area of land that was to be considered for re-zoning and no boundary detail.

In January 2010, a group of residents adjacent to Field 622 prepared a detailed document objecting to re-zoning Field 622, suggesting alternative sites and detailing reasons for rejecting Field 622. Prior to submission of this document, advice was sought from Planning and Environment at a meeting held at the department on Friday January 15th 2010. The residents were advised by a senior officer to finalise this document and send it to the officer concerned and **NOT** the Minister, within three weeks of that meeting. The officer concerned was Mr Thorne. Why this document should not go to the Minister was uncertain. It is evident that the document or parts thereof may subsequently have been used in preparation to counter the objections raised against re-zoning.

An approach has been made by residents to the Planning and Building Services Department to meet with the Minister, to discuss residents concern on the proposed development of Field 622.⁴ Regretfully, apart from the initial meeting with Mr Thorne, the person now employed to present the case on behalf of the Parish, no meetings, consultations or discussions were granted by the Department of Planning and Building Services. It appears however that the Parish has been granted the luxury of this opportunity with the Minister and Officers. An important concern of the residents adjacent to Field 622, has been the nature of consultation or lack thereof with the Parish and the inability to meet anybody with the Department of Planning and Environment.

Mr Thorne suggested that the initial planning application process 'generated a huge number of objections to the application.....this suggests an orchestrated campaign'. Whilst many objectors may be not be parishioners, might this not demonstrate an abhorrence by many islanders to the diminishing of Jersey's green zones by parties wishing to exploit these protected areas for development. Perhaps Mr Thorne and the Parish authorities should have considered this.

Morris Architects in their correspondence to the Planning and Building Services⁵, 'questions the validity of the objections received', requesting the Planning Department 'sample contact a number of the authors to ensure that there has been no abuse of the open nature of the planning system'. They further 'require' the department's clarification with regard to the sampling of objectors. An architectural firm should be well aware that it is within any Islander's right to raise objections to planning applications, regardless of where they live in the Island, regardless of how many applicants reside in the same accommodation. It is surprising that Morris Architects should make such demands. Mr Charles Alluto of the National Trust for Jersey advised me that the recent Plemont planning application raised over 100 written submissions of objection and 10,300

⁴ Correspondence Jason Lees-Baker 28th September 2011, 10th October 2012

⁵ Correspondence dated 7th January 2011 Morris Architects to Planning & Building Services

objectors signed the National Trust for Jersey's petition against development at Plemont. Would Morris Architects have requested the same clarification requests of Islander's objections for the Plemont planning application?

Additionally, an article in the Jersey Evening Post on Friday 24th September 2010,⁶ 'Change to time limit will not affect the bequest for homes for the elderly - St. Ouen plans to go ahead' generated a letter relating to the change of the terms of Mrs Coulter's will from a resident from St. Helier. One can conclude the loss of green zone in the Island would also generate objections from concerned individuals, whether in the Parish of St. Ouen or not. The diminishing of Green Zones is an emotive subject.

An important concern of the residents adjacent to Field 622, has been the nature of consultation or lack thereof with the Parish and the inability to meet anybody with the Department of Planning and Environment, subsequent to the initial meeting with Mr Thorne. This represents a questionable level playing field.

Conclusion:

In conclusion therefore I hope that the above demonstrates the lack of consultation that has been afforded interested parties objecting to this application and one must ask why the applicant has been afforded discussion with the Planning and Environment Department and the same luxury has not been extended to the objectors. The green zone and the protection thereof is a highly emotive subject, of interest to a wide variety of Islanders and a matter to be taken extremely seriously.

Madeleine Poole

⁶ Jersey Evening Post article