



Town Residents' Rejuvenation Association

19 February 2009

By Post and Email

Senator Cohen
Highcliff
La Rue de la Mare des Pres
St. John
Jersey JE3 4DT

Connétable M K Jackson
Braemar
Le Mont Gras d'Eau
St. Brelade
Jersey JE3 8ED

Connétable Crowcroft
Town Hall
P.O. Box 50
St Helier
Jersey JE4 8PA

Dear Messrs Cohen, Jackson and Crowcroft

Proposed Multi-Storey Car Park at Ann Court

On 2nd December 1997, a petition was presented to the States of Jersey stating that *"there is substantial public support for a public Town Park with underground car park on the land currently comprising the public car park at Gas Place and the private car park occupying the site of the former Gas Company offices and workshops, the whole situate between Bath Street and the new Gas Company offices"* however, due to the cost of disposing of the contaminated land on the gas works site, the proposal to build an underground multi-storey car park ("**MSCP**") has been shelved.

We are now writing with regard to last Thursday evening's public meeting at the Town Hall which was called in order to discuss the proposed plans to demolish Ann Court in order to construct a MSCP to replace parking that will be lost at Gas Place and the Tallman Site when the proposed Millennium Town Park ("**MTP**") is created, and make provision for spaces that will be lost when Minden Place will eventually be demolished.

We understand from a message delivered to the attendees of the meeting by Senator Perchard that, Mr Cohen has undertaken to review this area of town and produce a master plan within the next three months.

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Chairman: Laura Storey, 4 Maison de Berget, 32 Providence Street, St Helier Jersey JE2 4SQ – 07797 713 021 – mail@trra.co.uk
Secretary: Elizabeth Heard, 18 Mary Ann Mews, Belmont Place, St Helier, Jersey JE2 4BP 07797 714 327 – secretary@trra.co.uk

On behalf of the Town Residents' Rejuvenation Association, together with the 1,500 people who have signed our petition so far, we would like to lay out the objections to the development of Ann Court into a MSCP and advise you of the many comments and suggestions made by the public. Whilst we understand that not all of these options are viable, we feel that many deserve consideration and would urge you strongly to reconsider this matter in order to find a solution that will benefit both residents and town users.

THE ISSUES

We understand it is the intention to construct a car park at Ann Court with 794 spaces. The pay & display car park at Gas Place has 386 spaces, leaving a difference of 408. We are aware that in the next 10 years it is the intention that Minden Place will be demolished and under those plans we will lose a further 238 spaces however, it is our belief that, in the meantime, people who usually use Green Street, Patriotic Street and Pier Road will use the Ann Court car park due to its close proximity to the town centre. This will result in an increase of over 400 cars in an already congested area.

Already in the mornings, traffic is backed up along Charles Street, Brooklyn Street, Bath Street, Minden Place and into Burrard Street and the construction of a MSCP on Ann Court can surely only exacerbate the situation. We also understand from plans that it is the intention that the primary access route to the car park will be off St Saviour's Road and down Brooklyn Street, however, we consider it imprudent to believe that commuters from the west of the island would use the ring road to access Ann Court as opposed to cutting through town, down the Parade, through Union Street and Burrard Street

We are aware that there is parking on the Tallman site that is leased out privately and not through pay and display parking and, we would query the need to spend tax payers money on building a public car park to accommodate users of private parking facilities when potentially they may be able to find alternative private parking.

In addition, we have noted that, at around 10am on Monday 16th February, there were at least 300 parking spaces available at Pier Road and this clearly demonstrates that our car parks are presently under utilised and we again question the need to create additional parking in an already congested town centre.

In addition to questioning the number of parking spaces required, we also feel that the location of the car park is not appropriate for a number of reasons.

The Ann Court site is in a highly residential area with De Quetteville Court, Mary Ann Mews, Maison de Berger and Liberation Court being in the immediate vicinity, with plans for further housing on the old Le Coin Flats site, and planning for housing having recently been passed for

the Wesley Methodist Chapel in Wesley Street. A car park in such a residential area will have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of the residents with increased traffic, noise and air pollution, together with the anti-social behaviour often associated with MSCP, as well as substantially changing the character of the area.

We are extremely concerned with road safety issues as there are a lot of children living in the area and the volume of traffic a new car park would bring can only mean an increase to the possibility of there being accidents in the area.

You may also have read in the Jersey Evening Post recently the issues residents have had in the Patriotic Street area and for your ease of reference, we have enclosed copies of their letters to the editor. The building of a MSCP at Ann Court will have a detrimental affect to several hundred people in the immediate vicinity and, in respect of the anti-social behaviour, we note that Minden Place car park has a "Sharps Only" bin at the exit. This is extremely concerning to residents that the provision of bins suggests that it is acknowledged that drug use is prevalent in Minden Place car park, and quite possibly, the same sort of behaviour will occur in the new car park. This is worrying that drug use may be exposed to such a densely populated area, and one with a high population of youngsters.

In building a MSCP on Ann Court, you will also be losing a prime site for sheltered accommodation. Our Housing Minister has stated that the previous residents are happy with where they've been housed however, during our petitioning, we have been privileged to speak with many of the previous residents and, whilst it is acknowledged that the property is in a poor state of repair, the ex-residents enjoyed living there. The site is extremely close to town and they could easily walk into town for their shopping and interact with the community. Some ex-residents who we've spoken with have expressed feelings of isolation as to where they've been moved to and, whilst you will have some elderly who wish to live outside the town centre, there are many who for years have enjoyed living in Ann Court and proved that it was an excellent site for sheltered accommodation.

With an existing waiting list of a few hundred for sheltered accommodation, and an increasingly ageing population, we need sites for sheltered housing, not for car parks and to lose this site to a MSCP will surely have a negative affect on future housing stocks for sheltered accommodation.

We also understand that the site was previously marshland and that in fact a stream runs between Maison de Berger (Premier Carpets) and Mary Ann Mews, under Ann Court, before turning right down Philip Street. We have also been made aware that, the reason for the subsidence of the buildings on Ann Court opposite Philip Street, is because the buildings were not piled when they were originally constructed in the 1970s. Given that the land is marsh land, we question what issues would result in a car park being built on the site, especially in light of the

recent problems on Goose Green. What extra expense would be involved in building a MSCP on marsh land as opposed to an alternative site which would not be subjected to these issues?

THE PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Conceding that there is a requirement to provide for parking being lost when the MTP is created, but at the same time recognising that Ann Court should not be used for the development of a MSCP, the following suggestions have been made. At the heart of many of these solutions, was the overwhelming demand for more money to be invested into our transport system and develop a more frequent and wide reaching bus service and the re-introduction of the hoppla bus service, whilst also addressing the needs of residents' parking. There are also calls for improved provisions for cyclists to include the extension of the cycle network and more secure parking for bicycles. Some comments were also made in respect of the provision for charging points for electric cars and a call was made for the reintroduction of the car park information boards which used to stand on the main access roads into town however, rather than the boards just reflecting full or space, the number of spaces available could be displayed.

As we have already discussed, we do not believe there is a requirement for an 800 space MSCP if the situation of car parking and an island wide transport system is addressed fully and as such, we should be looking at smaller sites. If the States of Jersey still feel the requirement to create more spaces than those that are being lost, then several smaller sites, on, or just off, the ring road should be considered as this would ease congestion that can only arise with 800 cars attempting to get into one area of the town centre.

At present, there is land earmarked for housing opposite Co-Op Grande Marché. This is a smaller site than Ann Court and, although we would lose the housing planned for the site if a car park were developed on it, it would mean that you could free up the larger site of Ann Court, thus gaining extra much needed accommodation in the long run. This site is also immediately off the ring road and hard to get to if attempting to get to it through town. This would hopefully mean less congestion in the town area as people would use the ring road for what it was meant for, leading to a more pleasant environment in the town centre for the residents and the town users.

Snow Hill has also been identified by many people for a potential MSCP and this site was looked at in the mid 1960s (with the States of Jersey actually agreeing to go ahead with the development) and again in more recent years. This site could be accessed immediately off the Green Street roundabout providing easy access for both east and west of island commuters.

There is also the surface area of Green Street and suggestions have been made to extending this car park. Again, it has excellent access routes and is already a well used and popular car park proving it is in a good location for both shoppers and commuters. Increasing parking at this end

of town would also increase footfall along La Colomberie assisting in the much needed rejuvenation of this area.

We also are aware that in May 2007, planning approval was given to change the use of land at Ann Street Brewery to parking. Unfortunately we have not been able to research this option fully as the plans were not available at Planning when we visited. We are aware that this land is in private ownership, and there is a cost element to purchasing/leasing the land. However, this cost could potentially be offset against the future cost of purchasing land for housing that will be needed to replace Ann Court.

Questions have also been raised as to the viability of the Odeon site, to which Nelson Street car park adjoins. Although we are aware that the Odeon Building itself is a Site of Special Interest, and therefore unsure as to what extent the building could be developed, the foot print for the adjoining car park and Nelson Street car park could be sufficient to create a MSCP to house the spaces lost from Gas Place.

A number of people have also queried the need for the MTP to occupy such a large site and have proposed that part of the site is used for a small MSCP. Given that there is a considerable argument against a requirement for an 800 space, could consideration be given to creating a smaller MSCP underground at a reduced cost, or utilise part of the site for an above ground MSCP?

There are also numerous sites around the world which have extensive roof top park areas and another solution is to retain the surface parking at Gas Place, and to enclose it and create a park on the roof of the structure.

In respect of the eventual demolition of Minden Place, an enormous number of people have expressed disbelief that, the States of Jersey feel that it is reaching the end of its useful existence. This is an ideal shoppers' car park in very easy walking distance of the shops which assists those with heavy shopping and with mobility problems. Moving the car park away from this site can only have a detrimental affect on trade in this area of town as people will move to Sand Street and use the shops at that end of town, or possibly shop out of town all together. The argument that cars are getting bigger is potentially weak as tax payers should not be expected to pay for the construction of parking spaces for the minority that choose to own a large 4x4.

CLOSING

We trust that in reviewing the situation, you both take into consideration the issues raised in this letter. There is overwhelming opposition to the proposed development and, as our elected members of the States of Jersey, we hope that you will take into account public opinion in the matter and source alternative solutions that will benefit both commuters, bus users, town users

and especially the residents of the town centre who feel that yet again solutions are being considered at the detriment of their quality of life.

If you would like to discuss this matter in any further detail, please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Heard or me on 07797 714 327 or 07797 713 021 respectively.

Your acknowledgement of this letter by return would be very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Laura Storey (Mrs)

Chairman

cc – all elected states members by email