

**FORT REGENT: LEISURE POOL**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 12th June 1990  
by the Fort Regent Development Committee**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

160

1990

P.85

Price : £1.00

## PROPOSITION

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of the opinion -**

**to agree, in principle, to the construction of a leisure pool at Fort Regent.**

### FORT REGENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- NOTES:**
- 1. The Tourism Committee supports this Proposition.**
  - 2. The Policy and Resources Committee having considered the report and proposition of the Fort Regent Development Committee, does not question that a case can be made for adding to the public swimming pool facilities provided in the Island. In the view of the Committee, what remains an issue is -**
    - (a) what form those facilities should take;**
    - (b) where the facilities would be best located;**
    - (c) when the facilities could be provided having regard to competing claims on the limited resources of the Island.**

**In May 1989 the States authorised the preparation of detailed proposals for a community pool at Les Quennevais and a leisure pool at Fort Regent. The Committee is of the view that the States should be in a position to consider the relative merits of each of these proposals, on the reasonable assumption that both could not be provided in the same year.**

An assessment needs to be made of the manpower resources each requires in the context of what can be made available, and also whether the public interest would be served more by a 25 metre swimming pool and learner pool at Les Quennevais or a leisure pool at Fort Regent.

The Committee recognises the importance of community facilities of this nature and the need in this respect can be expected to be reflected in the relative priority accorded to such a project when consideration is given to the capital programme for subsequent years. The Committee is presently considering the best organisational structure for making proper provision for sport, leisure and recreation, and proposes to make recommendations to the States within the next few months. One outcome of this exercise can be expected to be a firmer base from which to assess and establish relative priorities in this area.

3. The Establishment Committee has been advised by officers of the Fort Regent Development Committee that it envisages that an additional 6.5 full-time permanent staff, together with extra seasonal workers, will be required to run the new pool. Without an opportunity for its officers to investigate the basis for this manpower projection, the Committee is unable to confirm whether the projection is well founded. At this stage, the Committee suggests that the manpower implications must be viewed as a minimum requirement and that the States should bear in mind that an actual figure might prove to be higher.

The Committee would also draw the attention of members to the fact that the need for additional staff would arise after 1992 when the public sector

is obliged, in accordance with the policy adopted by the States, to allow no growth in manpower. Thus, any increase in manpower to provide for cover at a new leisure pool would need to be accommodated by a corresponding decrease elsewhere within the public sector.

4. The Finance and Economics Committee notes that if the States approved the Proposition, the project would then be included in the list of capital priorities for consideration at a later date.

**Report**

1. On 30th May 1989, the States approved a proposition of the Education Committee, which, inter alia, agreed that the Fort Regent Development Committee should prepare a detailed report on the provision of a leisure pool at the Fort.
2. In addition, whilst not forming part of the proposition, the view was expressed by a number of members that it should be possible to obtain the facility of a leisure pool through the private sector, and accordingly it was suggested that the Committee should investigate this possibility.
3. Earlier, in 1988, the Committee had commissioned Team Leisure Limited, a division of Sargent and Potiriadis, chartered architects who are leaders in the design and development of water leisure facilities, to undertake a feasibility study in respect of a leisure pool at Fort Regent. They were of the opinion that there were three potential solutions as follows -
  - (a) the Glacis Field where a building with a pool hall measuring 1,680 square metres could be provided to house a leisure pool;
  - (b) the site between the existing pool and the main Fort where a new competitive pool of 814 square metres could be constructed so that the existing pool, which measures 1,290 square metres could be converted in to a leisure pool;
  - (c) the construction of a leisure pool on the site between the Fort and the existing pool comprising of some 1,575 square metres whilst maintaining the present pool as existing.

4. The Committee is advised that a pool estimated to cost £6 million in 1988 would probably now cost in round terms £7 million, excluding professional fees. Following the decision of May 1989, the Committee opened discussions with three potential developers.
5. The first, Biwater (Filtration) Limited made it clear that, in so far as it was concerned, the provision of a leisure pool as a stand alone amenity could not be made commercially viable having regard to the high level of investment for a limited period of years on a leasehold site without some form of financial guarantee from the States, and that, whilst it would be more feasible if it were to be managed in conjunction with the existing pool as a single aquatic attraction, it was felt that there would still need to be some form of financial guarantee offered by the States. The company was prepared to examine in detail the possibility of taking over the management of the whole of the Fort complex with the provision of a leisure pool as a condition but the Committee declined to consider such a course of action.
6. The second potential developer was Ecopool Designs Limited and the principal of that company, Mr. Harry Dorssers, asked to be given until 31st December 1989, to produce a feasibility study, a request which the Committee granted but, despite further approaches by the Committee to ascertain the progress made by that company, no further contact has been made at the time of writing this report.
7. The third developer was Mr. Randolph Fields who expressed some interest in the further development of Fort Regent on a private basis having been made aware that a leisure pool would be required but the Committee decided that it would not be prepared to make recommendations to the States, the effect of which would be to transfer the management and future development of the Fort to the private sector.

8. The Committee nevertheless remains strongly of the opinion that a leisure pool would be an extremely valuable and worthwhile addition to the amenities at Fort Regent not only because it would make the complex more attractive to tourists but in addition and many feel more importantly, it would provide an amenity for the local inhabitants particularly families which is becoming a part of most communities leisure activities. It would also create more free time and space in the existing pool for the serious swimmer, and would enable the Committee to establish other uses for which there is a demand e.g. health swimming clubs, senior citizen swimming clubs, etc., but for which at present provision cannot be made under the existing conditions.
  
9. The Fort Regent pool was built in 1972 and, as it is in use each week for around 110 hours, it is one of the most utilised pools in the British Isles. Undoubtedly, the provision of this pool has resulted in a substantial improvement in the standard of swimming within the Island in a comparatively short time. The demand for pool time is generated from four main sources, public swimming, the Education Service, the private aquatic clubs and Fort Regent itself for swimming instruction. The stage has long been reached whereby the requirements of these users cannot be fully satisfied and, as indicated earlier, some markets are not catered for at all at present.
  
10. National statistics show that the number of people in the United Kingdom using a square metre of water in a competitive pool similar to the pool at the Fort is 350 per annum as compared with 400 per square metre of water in a leisure pool. The number using a square metre of water at the Fort pool is 670 per annum, or nearly double the national average.

There is no doubt that, throughout the world including the British Isles, there has been a substantial increase in

the amount of investment in water theme parks consisting of many and varied water activities over the last few years. Equally, there is no doubt that the tourists of today will look for features such as water theme parks or leisure pools or similar activities in determining their holiday destination. The Committee is of the opinion that Jersey may not be able to support a major water theme park but it is firmly of the view that it could quite easily provide a leisure pool containing a number of exhilarating and challenging water experiences.

11. In their report, Pickering, Torkilsden and Associates, consultants commissioned by the Education Committee with the support of the Fort Regent Development Committee, concluded that the Island needed three additional swimming pools, a leisure pool at the Fort, a conventional pool in the west of the Island and possibly a small training pool somewhere in the east. The report also expresses some reservations in so far as accessibility to the Fort was concerned on the following grounds -

- (a) a lack of parking dedicated to Fort Regent;
- (b) the distance between the parking facilities and the poolside at the Fort;
- (c) the difficulty of using the Fort pool if the user, e.g. children, senior citizens, etc., did not possess a motor vehicle;
- (d) the fact that the centre is not situated on a route giving access to shopping or town centre.

12. Whilst this report is not intended to compare the relative merits or de-merits as between a conventional pool in the west or a leisure pool at the Fort, it is important to point out that those objections are equally applicable to a greater or lesser extent to the pool proposed in the west and that the Committee does not consider that the



observations made in this regard by Pickering, Torkilsden and Associates are valid. Since the report of the consultants it should be noted -

- (a) part of the Pier Road multi-storey car park has been made specifically available to the Fort and is therefore no longer available to the commuter;
- (b) the distance between the pool and the parking facilities is no greater than the distance between those areas and the north end of the centre where the weights are situated, an equally well used area by the public;
- (c) that neither is the proposed pool in the west on a shopping or town route;
- (d) that the pool in the west will be no more accessible to the users without transport than is the pool at the Fort.

13. Having regard to these observations, the Committee cannot understand that part of the Pickering, Torkilsden report and submits that the real deterrent in using the existing pool at the Fort is the substantial numbers already using it and the fact that, because of the requirements of the aquatic clubs, no evening use is offered to the public.

14. There are a number of advantages in building a leisure pool at Fort Regent as follows -

- (a) water based leisure activities would be located where they would be expected to be found especially by tourists namely at the Island's leisure centre;
- (b) advantage could be taken of some of the services at the existing pool and of the present staffing at the

centre keeping to a minimum the extra staff required and costs arising from a second pool;

- (c) non-serious swimmers who wish simply to enjoy a water experience would be transferred from the competitive pool resulting in turn to the making available of more time in that pool which could be reallocated in particular to the aquatic clubs, swimming instruction and public swimming;
- (d) an interchange of activities could take place between the two pools where conflict of interests occurred and better provision could be made for serious and competitive swimming without substantially interfering with local clubs.

15. It is estimated that the cost of operating a leisure pool at Fort Regent would be around £395,000 per annum. On the basis of the feasibility studies carried out by Team Leisure for the Committee in 1988, and by Biwater (Filtration) Limited in respect of a privately operated pool, it is believed that the leisure pool would generate an income of approximately £1 million per annum which, whilst insufficient to pay for the capital investment on the basis of the requirements of the capital fund, would cover the operating costs of £395,000 and at the same time make a contribution of around £600,000 towards the reduction in the overall deficit of the centre.

16. The Committee is fully aware of the restraints on capital development at the present time and that, if the States approved the proposition for a leisure pool by the public, it would not be possible at this stage to indicate the time by which such a decision could be implemented. However, the Committee feels that it is important that a decision should be made, in principle, as it would show clearly whether the States are prepared to make available to the local community amenities of the kind universally enjoyed by other communities in the United Kingdom

and elsewhere as well as its intention to invest in the Tourism Industry by the provision of a major amenity looked for by holidaymakers.

## APPENDIX 1

The following views were expressed by Jersey Tourism to representatives of Pickering-Torkilsden Partnership when they carried out a professional survey to determine the requirements of the Island for aquatic facilities in 1989.

1. Tourism's value to the Island's economy - 34 per cent gross domestic product, etc.
2. The increasing competitiveness of the tourism industry worldwide.
3. Policy to attract higher spend visitors, therefore, leisure pool would be valuable to increase Jersey's appeal to the young and to the young professionals with families.

Last survey: 10 per cent of visitors in age range 16-24; 15 per cent in range 25-34; 15 per cent in range 35-44; 17 per cent of all parties included children under 16.

4. Policy to increase off-season traffic and therefore essential to provide more good quality indoor attractions.
5. Major investments in the United Kingdom: Centre Park in Nottingham - £50 million; proposed Centre Park in Norfolk - £70 million as well as very many leisure centres/theme parks.
6. A leisure pool would be a major attraction for Jersey, one which Jersey Tourism could feature very strongly in our marketing and one which we believe would increase our off-season business.
7. A good leisure pool is likely to be very attractive to local casual swimmers who find the atmosphere of the existing Fort Regent pool more conducive to serious swimming.

8. A leisure pool in any reasonable location with good transport links would be desirable.

74 per cent resident population lives on the east of the Island, 33 per cent in St. Helier alone.

75 per cent of all tourist accommodation is in the east of the Island, 53 per cent in St. Helier alone.

A substantial proportion of land zoned for housing in the Island Plan is in St. Helier.

9. Fort Regent would be preferable because -
- (a) the site is central;
  - (b) accessibility could be improved without major cost, i.e. half hourly minibus from bottom of Pier Road;
  - (c) a management and staffing structure already exists and, therefore, there should be economies of scale;
  - (d) a good leisure pool would add to Fort Regent's appeal. Only 34 per cent of tourists visit Fort Regent now;
  - (e) the leisure pool would reduce the demand on the current Fort Regent pool, leaving more time available for clubs and other serious swimmers.

(Figures not available on proportion of regular and casual swimmers or locals versus tourists).

10. A training swimming pool at Les Quennevais would be of little or no value to tourism, one of the Island's two major industries. The catchment area would include approximately 22,000 residents.

11. The number of families with children living in Les Quennevais has reduced significantly in recent years, hence the reduction in the number of children entering Les Quennevais Secondary School. Certainly, until recently, there was a lower demand for facilities available at the Les Quennevais Playing Field complex than for those available at Grainville or Greve d'Azette. Updated figures have been requested from Education.
12. School pools, especially those at Victoria College, De La Salle and, soon, Grainville, with very little extra expenditure, could provide significant additional capacity for serious swimmers.
13. The addition of changing rooms, year round heating and some limited extra staffing would be considerably cheaper than providing a new training pool. Another training pool would not raise any significant income.
14. Tourism cannot comment on Fort Regent's assessment of capital costs for a leisure pool at £5 million. Estimated operational costs are £416,000 of which £178,500 relates to staffing. The staffing figure appears low for a leisure pool where safety and, therefore, numbers of lifeguards will be an important factor.

However, Fort Regent has only estimated that a leisure pool would attract an additional 300,000 visitors a year, resulting in a net surplus of £154,000, excluding capital repayments. If the pool is good, the tourist visits could exceed the 300,000 estimate.

## LEISURE POOLS

### Introduction

The past decade or so had witnessed rapid developments in the concept of leisure pools and water theme parks. The British Isles has followed the Americans, the Australians and the Swedes to name but a few in installing flumes and building leisure pools.

Water theme parks followed and large scale redevelopments in towns and cities throughout the country including seaside resorts involving such facilities have and are taking place. The range of attractions provided is growing steadily and the glossary which follows lists a few only.

### Leisure pools

Such may be described as a swimming pool indoor or outdoor which breaks away from the standard competition shape and size of pools. A leisure pool may incorporate some of the standard conventional features but it will offer many other exhilarating options to the user.

### On the beach

A beach is created by providing for a side or part of a side of the pool to slope away gradually to a shallow beach area. It proves extremely popular to the very young and to the non-swimmer. It also provides an excellent entry point for disabled persons wishing to use the pools. The beach area is often linked to the wave machine.

### Wave machines

A wave making machine creates artificial waves and some pools use it as a feature and hire out surf boards to be used on to the beach. The waves create rough water throughout the pool and of course needs careful supervision.

### **Toadstools and islands**

These fibre glass constructions vary in size and permanency and they can house slides or act as resting areas. Small versions, toadstools, are often removable so as to maintain a multi-purpose use of the pool area and are used effectively to divide areas of the pool of varying depth.

### **Flumes**

These are long slides with water passing through them to assist the user on his way through the flume. They will vary in length, gradient and the number of bends. There are a wide variety of colours available as well as sound and lighting effects which all add to the atmosphere. Some flumes are in fact transparent. The flumes may be U-shaped if indoors or in warm climates or completely covered-in in less favourable climatic conditions. A fast flume will be covered in for safety reasons and riders may or may not use a mat at the discretion of management. The smoothness of the ride may determine whether or not mats are used.

A high quality construction is crucial to a safe and enjoyable ride and the length of the flumes plus the twists and drops will determine its excitement value and therefore its appeal. Colours (lights) and sound will add to this value as more senses are attacked and even holograms are now included in some flumes. Some flumes may be short and terminate high of the water similar to a diving board but most terminate in a splash pool with shallow water.

The shallow water is important as it allows the user to walk away from the experience in safety and does not deter the weaker swimmer or the timid person. Flumes must create enough excitement and challenge to encourage return uses. It is interesting to note that Guernsey has installed a flume in the pool at Beau Sejour.



### **Floats and inflatables**

Large compressed foam floats may be successfully used in conjunction with inflatables. Normally these are restricted to planned sessions and they most certainly add an extra dimension to the programme.

### **Air and water temperature**

In order to enhance a leisure pool or any water theme area, the water and air temperature must be warm as the fun element of the area will be destroyed by a cold atmosphere.

### **Water jets and other games**

Water pistols, guns, hoses, fountains and many other such features enhance a leisure pool considerably. They do not take much space and are capable of change every few years in order to revitalise and/or maintain interest in the pool.

### **Mobile bases**

Recently some pools have been installed with movable floors and bulk heads and there are obvious advantages in being able to change the depth of water with the same area able to house "Learn to Swim" programmes and synchronised swimming. Movable bulk heads are used to alter the length of a pool whilst sunken walls may be lowered and raised in order to suit particular requirements.

### **Paddle boats**

These are a popular attraction in leisure pools but they are generally restricted to pre-arranged sessions.

### **Pool levels**

Within a leisure pool area, various pools may be situated on different levels and these are linked by slides or water features such as waterfalls, water grottos, etc. With pre-planning and imagination a

tiered structure adds considerably to the challenge and excitement of a pool.

### **Themes**

In order to create the right atmosphere, the walls of many pools are used to create an overall theme and such things as hanging mobiles are used to enhance the pool hall. Multi-coloured bases are provided in the shallow areas contributing in turn to the overall fun atmosphere.

The wide range of attractions available makes the design of a leisure pool extremely individual and such a pool at Fort Regent could be tailored to provide the facilities most expected.