

Briefing Paper | May 2026

Fort Regent developments

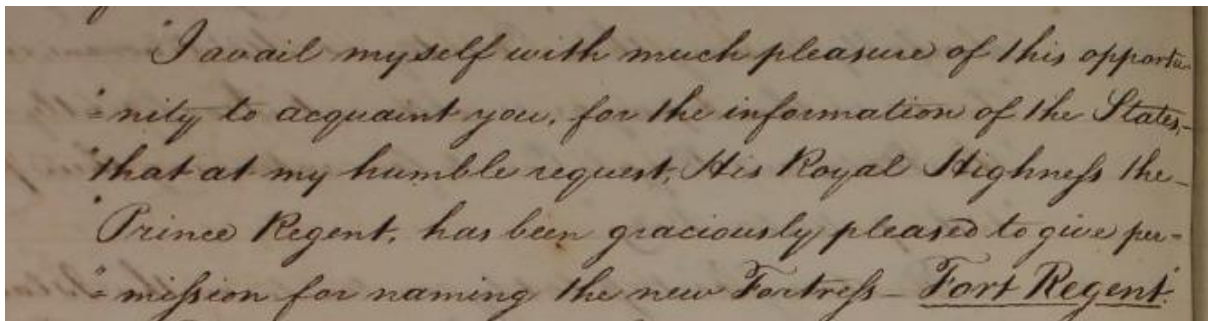
Overview

This paper provides a brief history of Fort Regent and sets out the development of Fort Regent into a public leisure and sport site. It looks at the development starting in 1967 and the subsequent reports and reviews into the Fort and the facilities to be provided there.



The construction of Fort Regent began in 1806 in the height of the Napoleonic Wars and was completed in 1814. Development occurred with the Battle of Jersey in mind, and the failure of Elizabeth Castle to operate effectively as a defensive fortification.

The Fort was named Fort Regent, after the Prince Regent George IV –



Extract 20th August 1814 States of Jersey Minutes

Fort Regent (Fort) remained garrisoned until 1932 and did see use by the German forces during the second world war occupation of Jersey who made further additions to the structure. Following the end of the War the Fort sat empty until it was purchased by the States from the Crown on 1st March 1958, as part of the [disposal of all War Department property on the Island](#).

Following the approval of an arrangement to use Jersey lottery profits to fund the development of the Fort, on [12th December 1967](#), Deputy Tomes brought a proposal to turn the Fort into a publicly accessible leisure centre, with the aim of attracting both tourists and locals. This also saw the creation of the Fort Regent Development Committee. Throughout the 20th century, several reports and ideas were put forward on how to best develop the Fort in order to keep up with rapidly changing expectations of sport, leisure, and tourism provision.

A resource of interest, is available at the [Société Jersiaise website, in their Review: Photographs of Fort Regent Roof Construction](#), wherein they note a donation, in 2023, of 50 photographic prints of the Fort and the construction of the roof.

“Taken between 1967 and 1973, consisting of mostly monochrome photographic prints along with a small number of colour ones, the photographs were taken during the construction of Fort Regent into a leisure centre. Specifically, the photographs document the building of Fort Regent’s iconic roof, a key part of the project.”



CA-D01-AA-013 (above): View of the dome roof. Construction worker visible right.

Other key dates for the development and transformation of the Fort include the opening of the cable car in 1970 which linked Snow Hill directly to the Fort. This saw regular use until the last cable car ran in 1988. The ending of the cable car service was seen as a problem, as mentioned in the 1997 report (detailed below), for future Fort use and development as the direct and easy access to the town centre was lost.



Since the removal of the cable cars, multiple plans have been brought forward to introduce high speed lifts from Snow Hill (the same site of the cable car station) and a new cable car from the Waterfront. However, no plans to rebuild this direct link to town have been successful. The Fort is accessible via car or pedestrian access.

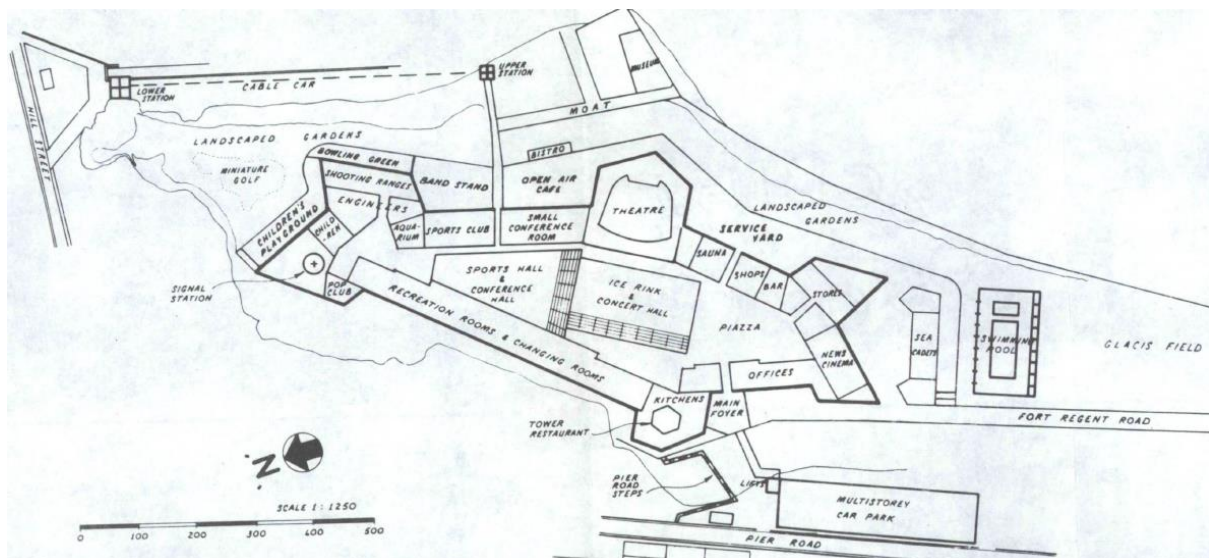
The now demolished swimming pool (ideas relating to the pool will be detailed further in this paper), was opened in 1971. The domed roof was completed in 1974, 6 years after the Fort was first opened to the public as a leisure facility.

Key Reports on the Development of Fort Regent

This section provides an overview of some of the numerous reports into proposed development of the Fort, to demonstrate the shifting requirements from the Fort, as well as the uncertainty for its best purpose that continues today. It is noted that this is not an exhaustive list of reports published, as some reiterate the same themes, some deal solely with financial implications, and some are undated making it difficult to locate where in the timeline they would fit.

1967: Feasibility study and economic appraisal of the Fort Regent Development Project

The oldest report that the States Greffe holds into the development of Fort Regent, provides a financial and economic review of the site whilst also setting out the first of many iterations of what should be included within the building. The report was undertaken further to the approval 'in principle' of the redevelopment project by the States on 12th December 1967.



1973: “Fort Regent Mid-Stage Development Report”

Further to the decision to develop the Fort into a recreational site in 1967, the first facilities for public use opened in 1968. However, by the early 1970's it became clear that there was a lack of vision and clarity on the expectation on what the result of this redevelopment should be.

This report had the brief to “*put forward proposals which would provide recreation facilities at the Fort for the maximum number of local residents and tourists*”. The report found that due to the lack of clarity on the vision for the Fort, expenditure had spiralled out of control as development continued. The development report sought to control expenditure by setting a £1.5m limit on the future development required to complete the 1967 agreement.

1974: “The Fort Regent Development”

Following the Mid-Stage Development Report, a further report was commissioned from the architect William Davies for the Fort Regent Development Committee to demonstrate the “proposed development necessary to complete the project”. This included detailed drawings of the allocations of sports clubs and facilities to the former barracks rooms further to conversion.

The Development laid out in this report became the Fort as it was, until 2025, known. Whilst there were changes in operators of the converted barracks rooms, and the loss of many of the recreational facilities, and the Fort is now closed, the layout and structures of the site remain relatively unchanged.

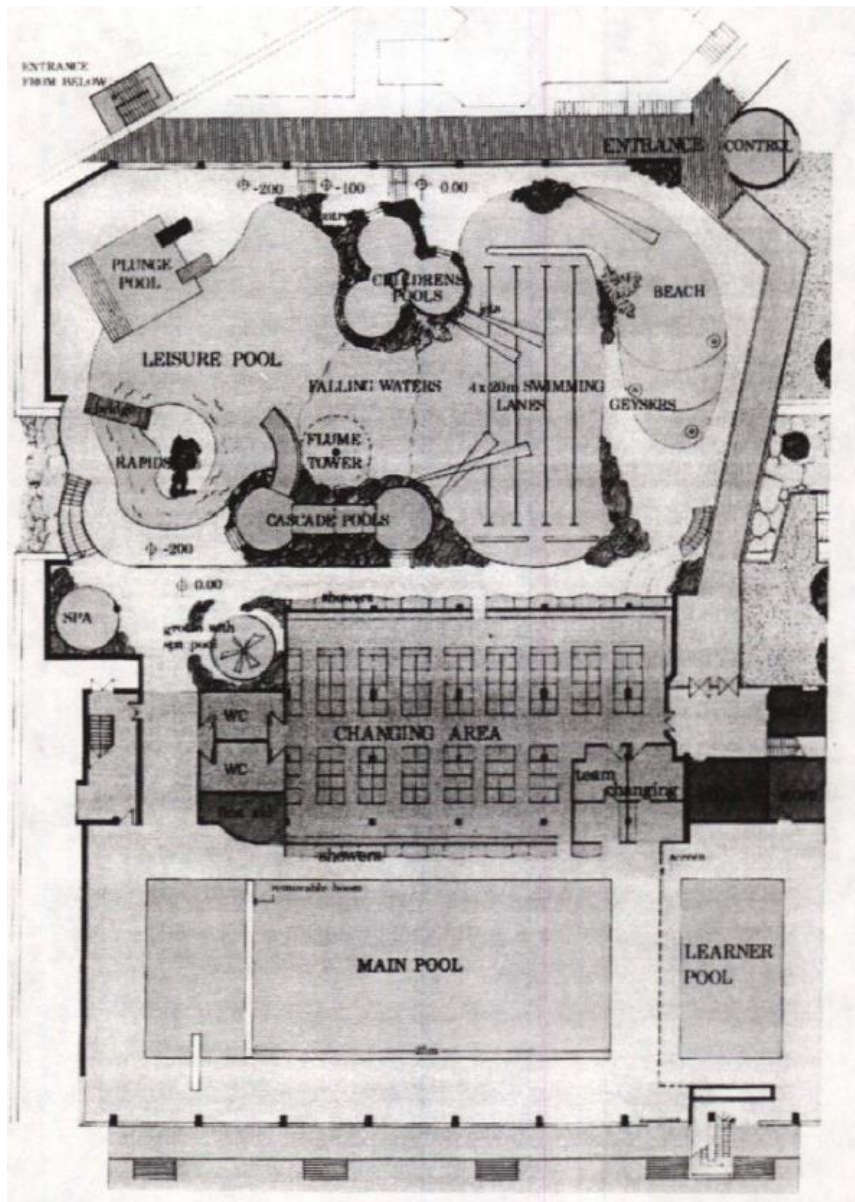
“Humfrey Holds the Key” (Approx 1991 – undated)

This report stands out from the others provided in the above timeline. Elements of each of the above reports can be seen at or around Fort Regent today, however nothing from this report has survived the continued change of the Fort.

“Humfrey Holds the Key” outlined a vision for the swimming pool at Fort Regent to be transformed into a “leisure pool”. This was partly envisioned as a “major attraction which can be marketed by Tourism”. Its transformation into a leisure pool would see the footprint of the site double, which in turn would create “greater flexibility” allowing “current aquatic clubs to extend, as well as new clubs to start up”. Studies mentioned in the report argued that leisure pools saw more visitors than normal pools, as well as having a larger catchment area so it was strongly believed that a leisure pool would be well used.

This new leisure pool was never built, and no elements suggested in this report survive today, differing from the other key development reports. This report is undated, so it is difficult to contextualise the plans, and explain why they did not proceed. However, a new leisure pool was eventually constructed at the Waterfront and the pool building at the Fort was demolished in 2021.





1995: A business-driven study for potential future use of Fort Regent

A rather different study of Fort Regent was prepared in 1995 by the Leisure Division of Scottish & Newcastle PLC for the States of Jersey. As with previous reviews it sought to review the current operation of Fort Regent, review the premisses and formulate future uses. Referring to previous reports, this study stated –

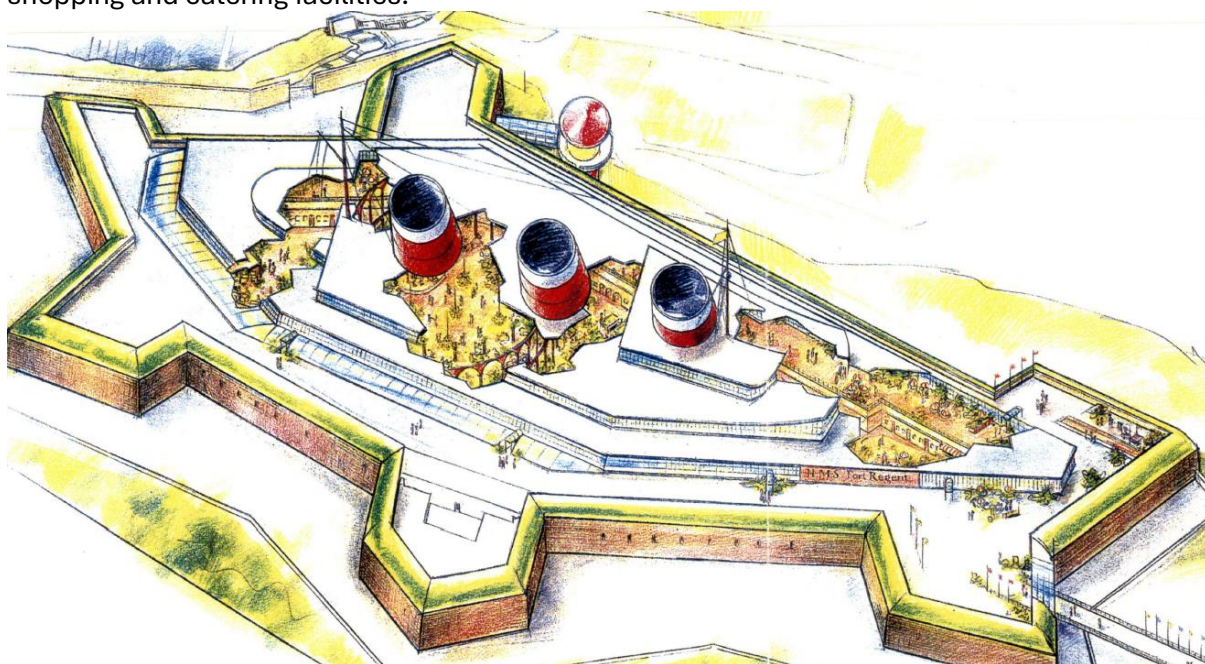
This analysis will not be repeated. After reading previously produced studies and research and after discussions with various responsible people, we came to the unanimous conclusion:

Let's forget everything we (think) we know about Fort Regent
because something dramatic should happen to it !

Whilst a good part of the review did actually go on to analyse the current costs and the structure, it also proposed some interesting options –

Option 1 - “the town on the hill” – to turn the fort into a Leisure, Entertainment and Shopping experience. It included shops, catering, a children’s playground and a cinema/theatre. It also analysed the potential for including a ‘health hydro’ and ten pin bowling.

Option 2 – H.M.S Fort Regent – re-designing the Fort as a massive ocean steamer on top of the cliff. It would include activities such as virtual reality, theatres, cinemas and shows, along with shopping and catering facilities.





1997: The Future of Fort Regent - The Jersey Sports Village Community Sports Centre into the Millennium with 20-20 Vision

This report was created by Roger Quinton Associated further to an invite for expression of interest in 1996 for the feasibility study of turning Fort Regent into a Community Sports Centre. The report noted that if the recommendations were implemented it would “mark the future of Fort Regent as a Sporting destination of European importance”.

The report noted that of the 2400 sports centres and 1700 indoor swimming pools in the UK every one of the “first generation” centres had seen redevelopment and modernisation, except for Fort Regent. It was also noted that there had been other facilities added to the Fort with no clear planning policy or thought to the relationship with each other –

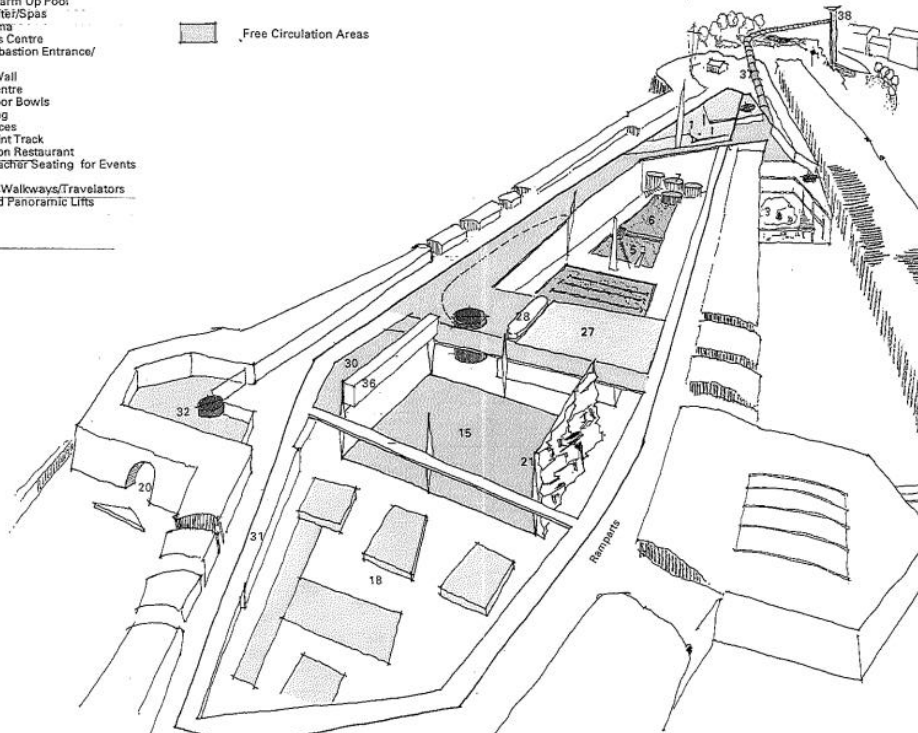
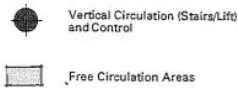
3.23 Key issues identified as the basis of this study, relevant to the future development of Fort Regent include:

- the original concept was the provision of community sports and recreation facilities and the provision of ‘wet-weather’ leisure and entertainment facilities for tourists;
- Fort Regent’s development over the subsequent years has lacked strategic direction;
- many of the internal and external facilities and features have grown in an ‘ad hoc’ way linked to market trends, isolated sports development projects and commercial leisure driven projects;
- the perceptions of the Fort’s delivery of services by residents, visitors, by Officers and Members of the States has been influenced by:
 - unclear political direction;
 - no clear public image of what the complex is;
 - poor access and unwelcoming approach;
 - facilities which impact detrimentally on each other;
 - an emotive pricing structure, with a high entrance fee as well as activity fee;
 - long off-peak season of ‘end of the pier’, and tourist attractions; and
 - a difficult mix of sports and other visitors in common areas of the building.

3.24 These issues form the starting point for this appraisal of the building as a Community Sports Centre.

The consultants undertook a ‘mini conference’ on 6th November 1996 identifying a large number of ideas related to current demand. Further to this conference the consultants undertook consultation with a sample of teenagers through structured discussion groups held at Grainville and at Hautlieu schools.

- 1 Health/Fitness Club
- 3 Children's Indoor Adventure Play
- 5 Diving Pool
- 6 Training/Warm Up Pool
- 7 Leisure Water/Spas
- 15 Events Arena
- 18 Gymnastics Centre
- 20 New West bastion Entrance/ Reception
- 21 Climbing Wall
- 26 Visitors' Centre
- 27 6 Rink Indoor Bowls
- 28 Bar/Catering
- 30 Centre Offices
- 31 Indoor Sprint Track
- 32 West Bastion Restaurant
- 36 Stored Bleacher Seating for Events Arena
- 37 Pedestrian Walkways/Travelators
- 38 High Speed Panoramic Lifts



Final plans included, amongst other things, indoor bowls, sports events arenas, a gymnastics area, and an extensive climbing wall.

2000: Proposed Redevelopment of Fort Regent

Further to the 1997 Feasibility Study, this iteration aimed to modernise the fort to ensure it remained a “premier sport and recreation facility” that encouraged sports tourism and cater for the people of Jersey. This proposal noted that the Fort remained mostly as it was from the initial development in the 1970s and required upgrading, a major part of this was easier access to and from town.

Like many of the proposals that have been published since this one, it introduced the concept of a high-speed lift system from Snow Hill leading to a modern visitors' centre.

- 3.7 The new lifts will provide an attractive, fast ascent from Snow Hill to the hilltop, taking approximately 30 seconds. Visitors will arrive at an enclosed glazed platform. This journey will provide attractive views of the town and coastline both from the glass lifts and the platform at the top. Visitors will then be able to continue their journey from the lift platform along the walkways to the Visitors' Centre, or continue on into the Fort, or out to the external Ramparts. At the completion of this phase, however, access into the Fort would be limited as the next phase of construction involves altering this end of the Fort. However, the lifts will be available to tourists and others interested in the historic features and the views the hill top affords.



This proposal aimed to keep the core concept of developing world class sporting facilities but aimed to blend them with other recreational/tourist facilities such as a heritage trail, restaurant, and shop. Further proposed development reports since this one have continued to echo its proposals. The phasing document for this development can be found [here](#) and the design report [here](#).

Plans Since 2000

Plans since the proposed 2000 development have, in many ways, been similar to original designs. The concept of high-speed lifts to re-connect the Fort to town is a common sight on other modern proposals as a way to reconnect pedestrians to the Fort directly from town.

The proposed Future Fort development, which was announced in 2021 but cancelled soon after in 2023, had plans to introduce high speed lifts similar to the proposed 2000 development, but both the Historic Environment Team and National Trust objected on the grounds that it was uncertain whether the benefits of the lifts would outweigh the “high heritage impacts”. In agreement the National Trust said the proposals would be “overly assertive in the setting and context.” An interactive 3D model of how these lifts and the proposed redevelopment of Snow Hill that would accompany their construction would have looked is available [here](#).



In a move away from the previous plans to make the Fort a centre of sporting excellence, the two most recent proposed developments, Future Fort and the current Fort Regent development, aim more to draw in tourism and provide leisure facilities for islanders.

2021: Future Fort

Inside, the Future Fort development aimed to add –

- A bowling alley
- A hotel
- A casino
- A multipurpose indoor venue
- A cinema

And outside the main building –

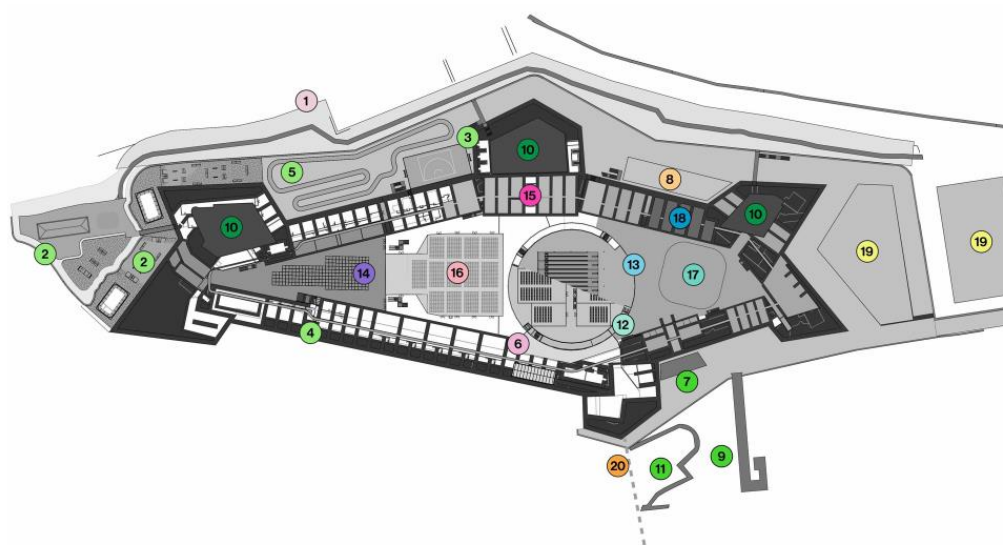
- Reinstate the garden area with walkways



- Provide an area for children's play in the moats
- Create winter gardens

2025: The Future of Fort Regent

The current proposed plans for the Fort began with a public survey through April and May 2025 asking what islanders most wanted at the site. The survey was answered by 6000 people and showed overwhelming support for a redevelopment of the site. Further to the survey, Jersey Development Company (contracted to redevelop the site) revealed their plans for the Fort –



Play Trail & Heritage Walk	+	Nursery	+	Egaming & Esports	+
Skateboarding	+	Improved Access	+	Multi-Purpose Concert Hall	+
3x3 Ball Court – Teenage Zone	+	Landscaped Gardens	+	Art & Cultural Piazza, Winter Ice Skating	+
Running Track	+	Architectural Lighting	+	Restaurants & Cafés	+
Pump Track	+	Cinema	+	Hotel	+
Roof Top Bar & Restaurant	+	Ten-Pin Bowling Alley & Arcade	+	Cable Cars	+
New Entrance Building	+	Indoor 'Ninja' Style Play, Climb, Bouldering & Sky Trail	+		

This plan includes the rebuilding and reinstatement of the cable cars that previously ran up to the Fort; except this time, they are planned to run from the Waterfront. This plan does not include the idea of lifts from Snow Hill, perhaps due to the feedback provided to the idea in the previous proposal.

The current plan does, however, shares many common elements of the Future Fort development, such as provision of a cinema, a bowling alley, landscaped gardens, and a climbing wall.



Significant progress has been made since the project was publicly announced in April 2025

- ✓ Community Engagement and Feedback
- ✓ States Assembly approve phase one funding (£43m)
- ✓ GoJ complete new sports facilities
- ✓ GoJ decant majority of Fort users
- ✓ Design Team appointed & plans advancing
- ✓ Engagement with key anchor operators
- ✓ Engagement with key stakeholder user groups and schools
- ✓ Roof planning application – submitted December 2025

The [Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026-2029](#) set out funding to commence the delivery of the Investing in Jersey vision. This funding included £43 million allocated to the redevelopment of Fort Regent.

The funding was approved in December 2025, despite an amendment to the [Budget \(P/70/2025 Amd. 13\)](#) lodged by Deputy Sir Philip Bailhache, intended to substantially reduce the funding. The deputy argued that approving a borrowing of (including the phase 2 funding of £67 million) £110 million was imprudent. The amendment was rejected 10 votes pour and 34 contre, and the £43 million allocation subsequently approved.

The next steps for the future of Fort Regent are as follows –

Next steps for 2026

April	Further engagement on the plans and layouts
May	Secure preferred operators for the anchor uses
July	Submit Planning Application for main works
October	Works commence on the roof and asbestos removal
December	Secure GoJ funding for second phase

<https://www.jerseydevelopment.je/fortregent>