

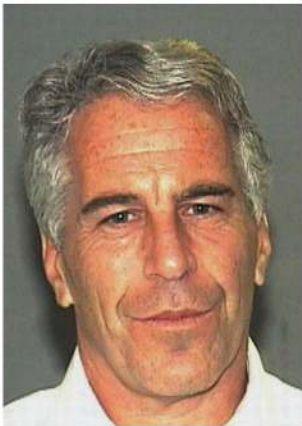
http://www.virginislandsdailynews.com/news/epstein-building-compound-on-great-st-james/article_a49261e9-40f0-57b1-9501-605e26e74cf3.html

Epstein building compound on Great St. James

By SUZANNE CARLSON Daily News Staff 6 hrs ago



A schematic filed with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources shows development plans for Great St. James island.



Jeffrey Epstein
HOGP

ST. THOMAS — Wealthy sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has been quietly working for years to construct a new compound on Great St. James island off the East End of St. Thomas, adding to a massive real estate portfolio that also includes neighboring Little St. James island, which has been his primary residence for decades.

V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources spokesman Jamal Nielsen confirmed Monday that at least some of that construction activity has been taking place without permission from the government — the third time in as many years that Epstein has gone beyond the scope of permitted building plans.

“We have confirmed that there’s unauthorized work going on at Great St. James, we have been in touch with the owners and we are setting up to have a meeting with them soon, to rectify this,” Nielsen said.

Nielsen could not say what specifically the unauthorized work consists of, but said DPNR Commissioner nominee Jean-Pierre Oriol would be available by phone today to answer questions about the situation.

Documents on file at the Coastal Zone Management division of DPNR show that Epstein used “Great St. Jim, LLC,” a shell company organized by St. Thomas attorney Erika Kellerhals, to purchase three parcels totaling 80.1 acres from the Danish Kjaer family for \$17.5 million on Jan. 18, 2016.

The remainder of the island — 12 parcels totaling 81.22 acres — was transferred from another St. Thomas company, GSJ Properties Corp., to Great St. Jim LLC for \$5 million on Jan. 21, 2016.

While it’s long been rumored that Epstein had purchased Great St. James, for years his name appeared nowhere on publicly available documents listing property ownership of the island.

The Daily News requested access to documents contained in Coastal Zone Management permit application files for the island on April 18, and was provided access to those records Monday.

The documents show that in 2011, Kellerhals, another attorney in her firm, Gregory Ferguson, and business consultant Brett Geary organized the St. Thomas company Poplar Inc.

A certificate of incumbency contained in the file lists Epstein as president of Poplar Inc., his longtime lawyer Darren Indyke is listed as vice president and secretary, and another longtime associate, Richard Kahn, is listed as treasurer.

The Daily Beast reported in April that Kellerhals, Indyke, and Kahn are listed as the only officers of other defunct nonprofits run by Epstein, including the C.O.U.Q. Foundation, J. Epstein Virgin Islands Foundation, and Epstein Interests. They’re also listed as officers for Gratitude America Ltd., a nonprofit formed in the Virgin Islands in 2012 through which Epstein has made financial contributions to various organizations.

The certificate specifically states that those individuals are authorized to act on behalf of the corporation with respect to all transactions, “including but not limited to transactions related to permitting matters submitted on behalf of Great St. Jim, LLC.”

Kellerhals organized Great St. Jim LLC on Oct. 26, 2015, with herself as the sole member, and identified Geary's company, Business Basics VI LLC, as the resident agent.

Kellerhals could not be reached for comment Monday.

Documents contained in the permit application file show that DPNR employees and Epstein's staff have been communicating for years about the project.

"[H]i Erika, spoke with Jeff yesterday and let him know that the scopes of work from both applications are being combined into one single permit. Dave of my staff is supposed to reach out to the LSJ [Little St. James] staff and arrange when he can make the required site visit. there are some specific details that were not included in the application package, so they will have to be verified during the site visit and notes made on the submitted drawings," Oriol wrote to Kellerhals in an email dated Aug. 16, 2016, under the subject line, "RE: Cistern Permit."

An email from DPNR legal counsel Michele Baker to Kellerhals dated Aug. 26, 2016, lists a number of documents required for the permit application to proceed, and indicates that "the OWNER" has to sign off.

Kellerhals responded in an email that "I understand that there are some places where the owner needs to sign if the attorney completes the application. I will discuss with Jeffrey and get you copies of those signed attachments asap. You are correct that I am no longer the sole member. In fact, I am not a member at all. The only position I serve is as counsel to Great St. Jim."

Epstein signed off on the application for a Coastal Zone Management major permit on Jan. 10, 2017, identifying himself as "President of Poplar, Inc., sole member of Great St. Jim, LLC."

Permit application documents and site plans on file show that Epstein is planning a complex of buildings across the approximately 160-acre island, connected by private road. The plans include a barge dock, two homes, cottages, an amphitheater, gardens, a marine electrical cable, solar array and generator, storage building, security building, workshed and machine shop, and an "underwater office & pool."

The permit application addresses mitigation efforts for endangered corals and the Virgin Islands tree boa — which was spotted on the island during site visits — and indicates

that the public will still have free access to the island's shoreline, which includes Christmas Cove, a popular boating site and home to floating restaurant Pizza Pi.

A wealthy financier long associated with the rich and powerful, including former President Bill Clinton and President Donald Trump, Epstein, 66, was convicted in 2008 of procuring a child under the age of 18 for prostitution.

An investigation by the Miami Herald found that despite evidence Epstein sexually abused dozens of underage girls, some who say they were forced to have sex with Epstein's rich friends at his various homes, including on Little St. James, federal prosecutor Alexander Acosta — who now serves as U.S. secretary of labor — worked with Epstein's defense attorneys to craft an extraordinarily lenient plea deal.

A federal judge ruled in February that Miami prosecutors violated the Crime Victims' Rights Act when they intentionally kept that agreement secret from victims in the case.

While Epstein owns lavish properties in New York City, Palm Beach, and New Mexico that he travels between on his private Boeing 727, he lists Little St. James as his primary residence on his sex offender registration.

Epstein last verified his registration with the V.I. Justice Department on March 15, which lists the 11 vehicles he owns — all of which are black — including a Mercedes-Benz S550, Bentley Arnage, Hummer II, Dodge Caravan, Range Rover, three Chevy Suburbans and three Cadillac Escalades.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.

Suzanne Carlson