

STATES OF JERSEY

Environment Panel Design of Homes Review

FRIDAY, 16th FEBRUARY 2007

Panel:

Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour (Chairman)

Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade

Connétable K.A. Le Brun of St. Mary

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Senator F.E. Cohen (Minister for Planning and Environment)

Mr. P. Nicholls

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Let us start. I have got to read the convening notice. It is important that you fully understand the conditions under which you are appearing at this hearing. The panel's proceedings are covered by parliamentary privilege through Article 34 of the States of Jersey Law 2005 and as a result you are protected from being sued or prosecuted for anything said during this hearing, although this privilege should obviously not be abused. The proceedings are being recorded and transcriptions will be made available on the Scrutiny website. Can I ask that you speak to the microphones so that we get a clear transcription copy? The Design of Homes Review has been going on for a while. This is our first opportunity to conduct a hearing. We have got a stack of questions - I think you have had a copy - which we would like to go over with you and explore this afternoon and Deputy Power will ask the first question.

Deputy S. Power:

This is kind of blue-sky stuff. The first question is; can you or are you able to outline the current document to which planning officers adhere to when providing guidance in respect of home design in Jersey, at the moment?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The main document is the Policy Planning Notes, which is a minimum specification for new housing developments and very clearly there are sometimes exceptions in relation to, for example, historic buildings, but of course the main objective is to get the Design for Homes document in place as soon as

possible and the Design for New Homes document, will be the guide from then on.

Deputy S. Power:

In an ideal world, if you were given carte blanche, what would you change or how would you wish to see designer homes improved here in Jersey?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

In many, many different ways and it evolves every time I look at anything. I came back from our trip to Vienna with new ideas of things that I would never have thought would have been applicable to Jersey. The eco-development we saw in the suburbs of Vienna, while it has no architectural relevance to Jersey, could just as easily be in Jersey, developing the community spirit we saw over there; the sense of social responsibility. I think that my views are changing. I believe fundamentally that homes should have, as you know, reasonably sized rooms where people can get from those rooms what they expect, so that means a bedroom where you can fit a bed in; you do not have to move the bed to get out of the room; where you do not have to have specially cut-down furniture; really fit for purpose, but I think that we need to shift and move our requirements more in tune with environmentally conscious living. We cannot on the one hand have an environment policy around ECO-ACTIVE, for example, and not be conscious of ensuring that we have the best environmental credentials in our new homes, and I think we are going to be moving as quickly as we can towards that.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Are there any further questions on that one? No. Okay, in that case I will go on. On researching bits and pieces from the Internet it has become apparent that in the United States they measure living space slightly different to the way Europeans do and they only include the actual living space whereas the European standards include the boundary walls and garages and other non-liveable areas. That said, the standards that have been set over the last 25, 30 years for American-style detached buildings has moved substantially upwards from a standard of 450 square foot per person to somewhere in the order between 750 and 900 square foot per person, notwithstanding that over that period of time the average number of people living in a household has come down. It is generally accepted that a sizeable unit, minimum size, median unit size for accommodation for a family is of the order of some 2,000 square feet. Making comparisons for European square footage standards, it would appear that the UK are near if not at the bottom of the scale in terms of the individual sizes that they apportion per person, and bearing in mind that Jersey pegs its standards fairly closely to the UK, I just wondered what you would consider to be an adequate size for units of accommodation perhaps based on this square footage idea per person for units of accommodation for single people or couples or, indeed, for families?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am not sure I can give an answer that does justice to the question here because it is the first time I have

heard the figures. There are all sorts of issues we have got to balance. What is an adequate space for one person is not necessarily an adequate space for another. Most people would probably prefer to have larger spaces than smaller spaces but if you have larger spaces they are more expensive to heat and more difficult to heat; they have less environmental benefits. All I can give you as a guide is that we are looking to try and move single person social retirement housing up to about 650 square feet. So, that is a single person house of about 650 square feet. Now, whether you can extrapolate that and say that that means that we should provide 650 square feet per person per house I do not know; I would not have thought so. Of course it depends very much on the design of the accommodation. It is not just about the square footage. It is about the space utilisation. We saw that when we were on our trip, and I think we need to have much greater control and much greater -- we must offer much greater guidance to applicants as to the optimum utilisation of the space that they create. You often look at flats, particularly where lots and lots of space is wasted. I was very against the idea of gallery access to flats until we went to have a look at that development in Vienna, where you can see just what benefits gallery access gives in terms of creating more useable space for the occupier. So it is not a question of just the space; if half of it is in corridors it is wasted space.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Bearing in mind that the things that we have seen and perhaps the changes that have happened to your thinking, do you think there is a requirement perhaps to revise the building regulations document in the light of what you have seen?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I think we are going to do that. Maybe Paul can answer a bit better on that, if you will allow him?

Mr. P. Nicholls:

Yes, I think this whole area is a double act between planning and building control, clearly. The space standards that we are talking about just at the moment are more of a planning issue than building control issue but I think for most of these questions you have got to look at the answer from both points of view and certainly when we get on to issues like energy conservation, environmental standards, it is the building regulations that really can bite and can get you the most rapid improvement in the new stock that is being rolled out. As far as space requirements go, it is about balancing many considerations here and all we are doing is setting a bare minimum of standards, which is considered absolutely one must not go below, and of course people can go as far above those standards as they wish. There is a role for the market here and we do have to consider the interaction between standards that we may apply and the impact on house prices and markets and affordability and so on. That is another aspect that we have to bring to bear on this. There is a difficulty with the sort of measure you are outlining of square feet per person because of course we do not control how many people live in a house. We only have a broad correlation there between numbers of bedrooms and how many people are likely to live in that property

over a period of time. So we do not tend to use that as a standard - square footage per person - but rather deal with room sizes and the adequacy of rooms for their purpose.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Can I add a bit? In terms of the controls we put in place, very clearly the Design for Homes document and your significant input into that is going to drive how we deliver this stuff in the future and the sooner we complete it the better, and it is better as a partnership exercise, we will get to the end more quickly.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Can I talk to you about the suitability at the moment of Jersey's amenity space in all aspects, including cupboards that will be big enough to take coat hangers to playgrounds that will be big enough to provide exercise for the children? What are your views as to the current situation and the needs of the future?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, amenity space in terms of cupboards; obviously you need to have cupboards that fit coat hangers but what you have said is a very good point because sometimes they do not and it is a very easy thing to overlook but you end up with a useless cupboard if you do not. But on the more general issue of amenity space for individual homes, I think it is a balance. There is a case for providing private amenity space for each home and there is also a case for providing combined amenity space to create more of a community and I think you have just got to balance the 2. Again, I am not sure it is necessarily something that you have got to say we provide X square feet per person living in the house of private amenity space. It is what sort of amenity space it is and what is the complementary community living space that is provided, and I was quite interested in the relationship we saw between small gardens and large areas in the centre of developments and we saw children's play areas placed at key points, not stuck over in the corner where no one is ever going to use them. They are put in the centre of developments. They did not necessarily have to be huge but they needed to be in the right place. So, we are back to the same thing. It has got to be appropriate.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Do you think the understanding of our situation and the future is going to be dependent upon the clear guidelines that are delivered to the architects and planners? What do think of the guidelines at the moment?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

We need to very significantly improve the guidelines. The problem is though that a lot of the things we are talking about are not issues that you can just deal with by box ticking. They are issues where you have to have a certain inherent understanding of the underlying principle, whether it is a style in

architecture, quality of finish, appropriate space and you can do whatever you can to try and lead people but you are never going to get 100 per cent. So, for example, we are working at the moment on a design guide. The idea of the design guide is; here is the conversion of the sets of words that we put out in SPGs (Supplementary Planning Guidance) into a picture book, effectively. Now, that is not going to result in every application being of high quality but hopefully what it will do is result in a larger number of applications being of a higher quality. You are never going to get to 100 per cent. You are never going to get to a set of rules that deliver the accommodation that us, round this table, would like to deliver in every case; it is just not a world like that.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Inspiration is not necessarily going to deal with.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

That is why you are always going to need planning officers. The concept and the design guide is not you produce a design guide and you can fire everybody in the Planning Department; it does not work like that. These are just tools to hopefully turn people on to the principles that we would like to promote.

Deputy S. Power:

Sir, can I ask just a supplementary on that? Does that mean then that you would prefer in future that the Planning Department becomes less prescriptive but more guideline orientated? When I say prescriptive I mean the development brief type approach.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, as you know, Deputy Power, I am not a fan of development briefs. I think that development briefs, from my limited experience, merely lock the department in and do not provide us with what we want. I think that you have to have a combination of a prescriptive mechanism and a guide and you have to get the balance right, and that is why there is always a place for the creative element in this. There is always an architect needed. The better creative skills of the architect the better the finished product, because these are not things that you can just say we are going to provide X square feet per person, we are going to provide X amenity space per person. It does not produce the results you want.

Deputy S. Power:

But good design will produce the results if you allow that good designer to --

Senator F.E. Cohen:

We have got to try and encourage good design at every level here. Really good design is not just about the design itself; it is about making the spaces created appropriate for the people living in it. That is as

much a good design as what the building looks like from the exterior to the passer by.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Leading off to something slightly different, regarding the life-long homes; what do you see as the way forward or proactive action that you might be taking? Have you in mind of trying to make as many homes as possible life-long -- the idea for certain sections of the community, because it would seem to be flying in the face of first-time people on the ladder and such like, do you have in mind of being totally life-long homes? Naturally, also, if one does look into them on this basis, it does necessitate most probably extra space and size available if you did go there. But primarily what are the thoughts regarding the life-long homes?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, remember we live in an island where we have not just had life-long homes, we have had multi-generation homes and having life-long occupation with a property - particularly in the countryside - is part of Jersey's history for centuries. So, life-long homes is nothing really new. I do not believe that you can design every home to take a person from their first purchase to their death in the home; I do not think you can do that. I think that again, going back to some of the things we saw when we were away, there were developments that very clearly were not life-long. They were designed for relatively young people with relatively young families. A certain part of some of the developments could be set aside for life-long experience but I think part of the natural process for a lot of people is that they do change homes. Now, what we need to do is to make sure that accommodation that reasonably logically could be something that would take someone through their lifetime is properly designed to enable them to do it but I do not think you could apply it to all properties.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Obviously one thinks of the more elderly, which is -- because life-long that does start from very young or does start at a certain age to extend the person at, but even the life-long -- originally the initial ones, would have to be allowed for low switches, low everything and that there has to be a balance.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, I think there has to be a balance. Accommodation that logically could be life-long should take life-long design into its conception but you cannot apply it to every home. Very clearly you have got to apply it to retirement housing and with retirement housing, for example, I want to see us making sure that if they are not single level, that for example the building is designed to accommodate a lift or a stair lift easily so that at a later date you do not find you have got to take half the house out to put in a lift if the person becomes incapacitated. But I think there is a limit to it. I think, again, it is down to balance.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So you are saying it is more or less a term rather than a real future aspiration?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I do not see us ever getting to the point that every home is designed to enable the person to live in that home from the day of purchase to their death. I think that is an unrealistic aspiration, particularly if we are going to promote more town living. Because what will come out of a lot of town living is relatively dense development where that is quite difficult.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But then on the other hand I suppose, just thinking initially about that, if it was in a certain area within the town then obviously you would not expect just pure bungalows within a town. It would be so many different storeys. I suppose they would be more amenable to build lifetime ones incorporating lifts and wider doors and that?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, but on a case by case basis. I think there is opportunity and it should be an aspiration to deliver a reasonable proportion of new homes to lifetime standards but I do not think we can apply it to every single scheme. I think if we try and apply it to every single scheme we are being too prescriptive.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But on the other hand about the last one, coming in on that and it was not something that I had thought about until you literally just raised it, within the town area and that, because I know in rural districts that people when they get to a certain age and have difficulty in the driving and that they find that it is far easier to get about if they are within a more - not confined - but in a town area as well so that they would be ideal for them.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

But then they are moving to accommodation that is particularly suitable for them and we need to provide a sufficient quantity of that accommodation. But it is my very point that they will want to move at that point. Some people will want to move at that point.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Most of our housing stock appears to have picked up on the design heritage, if you like, from the Victorians in terms of layout and their preoccupation with room differentiation and separation so you must sleep in a bedroom, you must have dinner in a dining room and so on. Bearing in mind the large overheads that are attributable to the connection spaces between such rooms and the fact that ways of living have substantially changed and are changing into the future, what aspects of design do you think that are currently applied to layouts could be changed in order to use the volume of space within a

housing unit more effectively?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, there is an interesting practical answer to that question and that is if you look at the way people choose to break up the space if they purchase a shell. If you look at loft conversions or where you can take an industrial building and split them up, where people are able to buy a shell and are able to split the shell up as they wish, they never split it up as a conventional way, which is telling you something. It is telling you that people do not, if they have a choice, want to live in this Victorian concept of a kitchen and dining room, a drawing room, bedrooms upstairs. They want to do something different and most people, like my family, although we have got all those different rooms we just live in the kitchen. In fact, we might as well not have the others. So we need to look in the design of homes and hopefully it will come out in your submission that we have got to look at how we break up spaces. We need to look at people's lifestyles to ensure that the buildings properly accommodate normal everyday 21st century lifestyles. They do not often, I find.

Deputy S. Power:

It was interesting to see last week in one of the buildings we saw in Vienna, and I apologise to Members who were not there, that you can use an open space and the only area that was really closed off was the bathroom area. The bedroom area was open; the walls were not straight, they were slightly kinked. The floors were not straight and it worked quite well. That was probably a direct core vision of getting light into that particular unit. But it shows you what you can do with good design. It is a contrast to, say, if you go to the Spectrum development, which is a very angular, rectangular, square, conformist-type development and how there are alternatives out there which will aid good design in living in those square footages.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, absolutely. There is a whole movement now in the way we live that is fundamentally changing the way we live compared to the way our parents and grandparents lived and we need to react to that. I am sure that if we produced shell space for people in Jersey in significant numbers we would find that very few people would end up with a traditional layout.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Of course, I am picking up on the point the Constable raised about the opportunity for building lifelong buildings. A shell space by definition is infinitely flexible.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

It is.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

You are talking about lifestyle homes rather than lifetime homes when people will have a lifestyle in it. You need to design an estate for the elderly but it is unlikely to attract the university graduates, whether it be that they are not allowed to go there or whether if they were they would not want to be there, would they? It is a lifestyle choice.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Right, moving on, Sean.

Deputy S. Power:

One of the issues that has been a recurring theme in this review is that when a new development or estate is completed on the Island we see very small saplings or very small trees planted in very few areas. I think that these developments would benefit a lot more from much more soft landscaping and public amenities spaces. It would make them better quality of life areas. You view on that?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Not only would I agree but that is what I have been saying when I have looked round estates with planning officers. I am not sure that that means that you have got to expect developers to plant mature trees because from my experience with planting trees in Jersey you are usually better off thinking of 5 year leads and plant smaller trees because they tend to grow stronger and then after a few years they overtake the mature trees. But we need to have much softer landscaping. There is some very hard tarmac and very hard paved pavements. They are really not friendly. They are hard, unfriendly and not human places.

Deputy S. Power:

No. I always find when I look at some of the places I have seen recently in this review you see harsh paving and harsh tarmac, allocated car parking spaces, not a lot of landscaping and gallons of magnolia everywhere; and I think it could be so different with just a little direction.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Absolutely, and it does not need very much. It just needs using a different surface material and I said, for example, instead of using tarmac why cannot you use these resin gravel products that are much softer and the answer is, well, you cannot use them because kids fall over and they graze their knees more than they do on tarmac. Well, yes, is that really the case?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Now, many of the developments that we appear to build in Jersey seem to rely on putting in the roadway first and then the hard pavements and the hard landscaping and the parking for the cars. Then you build

the houses and then perhaps you turn your attention at a later stage towards the landscaping, generally by way of a few bits and pieces on the front, but mainly to the gardens at the rear. Some of the housing estates we saw on the trip to Vienna did away with the car parking elements - not to say to the state that people should not have a car but perhaps that they should consider where the car is parked first and out of the way as far as possible and to put pedestrianised areas at the forefront of the housing design layouts. One of the ways of doing this is to build car parks either underneath the building or to have them offset or to have particular reliance on communal transport schemes and buses and what-have-you. The key issue that arises from that is that you get an opportunity to pool the green spaces between the buildings to the benefit of all the residents and you have got private and communal gardens on the inside, and those spaces are probably more useful for the people who are living there for the kids to play and things like that than having to have separately designed amenity spaces away from the houses at the bottom of the estate for the kids to play on. Do you think, generally speaking, over the years that this European style of doing it is probably the better one in terms of giving people an opportunity to do more with the soft landscaping elements of public amenity spaces within any particular housing estate?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, the key to your idea and delivering it is affordable under area car parking really. You, as an individual, and me, as an individual, are of the same opinion as to the cost of that. The problem is that everyone else thinks it is 3 times that and we really need to get to the bottom of it. The key to delivering these much better schemes from what we saw is to get cars out of the way. If you can have a system whereby the cars are under the houses and the houses are for people and pedestrians you will have much better environments. We are told: "Well, it is too expensive." Now, is it or is it not? I do not know the answer. We need to find out.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Minister, could I ask you, please, about the privacy issue? There are external privacy issues in relation to people asking for development and other people objecting to it in relation to their windows being overlooked or their gardens being overlooked. There is also an internal aspect of privacy in relation to whether or not people can share the accommodation they have been asked to live in because of their genders or their relationships with other people - siblings, et cetera. What do you feel needs to be done, if anything, to improve privacy for residents in those respects?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I think it depends what you want. If you are going to put privacy of the individual as your number one criterion you are going to find it very difficult to produce the sort of town living that we privately have talked about.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Something like in Amsterdam, for example, they have big open windows with the curtains drawn back and people are watching everybody else going about their business. That does not seem to affect them. But it seems it is a cultural thing in some respects that we are stuck in the Victorian era of we shall not be seen in our drawing rooms and we shall not be seen in our dining rooms and we shall not be seen in our kitchens.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

These are attitudes that will take a long time to change but I suppose part of it is about developing a sense of community living. If you live on the estate of houses do you want to live on the basis that no one can see in what you are doing and you do your thing in your little space and the person next door to you does their thing in their little space and you never even speak to each other. Or do you want to have an environment where you have your privacy for the private times so when you are watching television in the evening everyone is not looking out the window but the rest of the time you have some community integration. We saw that; it works elsewhere. Jersey people are no different from other people and I am sure that, given the opportunity, they would embrace it.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Do you think they would embrace it if we had educated them a little better on the other opportunities for --

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, I think it is just a matter of giving people the opportunity. I do not think we have to educate them in terms of telling them they have got to do it. I think we just have to offer it to people and I am sure that a lot of the things we saw on our recent trip if they were taken exactly as they are and planted in Jersey, providing you could get round some issues - and there are some issues that the Chairman of the panel and I discussed while we were away - providing you can get round some of those issues you would have just the same sort of people living in those developments in Jersey as living in them in Vienna.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

And they were happy, were they?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

They were very happy indeed.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

On a slightly different subject again - I know I seem to be getting into the slightly different ones, but to put a bit of brightness on the proceedings once again, colours regarding the houses and estates and such

like. Have you got any particular feelings about that? Do you feel that it is a good thing to have the different colours on the estates or would that distract from the architecture itself, as it were, and people would be just more aligned to the colour and that? Also, have you in mind at all, because there is not a process at the moment, would it be too bureaucratic to have control over colour of certain premises and places, such as bright yellow, Norman's, and up St. Peter's Valley we have got a beautiful mauve one although really 50 per cent of the people think it is horrendous. What are your views on the aspects of all colour?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, Chris Shepley, who carried out the review of the waterfront and developed the supplementary planning guide, told me that he thought that coloured palettes were extremely important and, in fact, the development of the colour palette of the waterfront is one of the things that is high on the list of must dos. Colours define your identity in all sorts of different ways. You and I instantly know a colour that is inappropriate for Jersey in the same way as we know a colour that is appropriate for Jersey, and that is not a case of just getting used to it. It is a case of colours that reflect the things we see in the natural environment generally. I think there is a very good case for developing an approved colour palette for Jersey generally. It is probably divided into a dozen different sections that in this area you have an approved colour palette A and in the next area you have approved colour palette B and in the countryside you have approved colour palette C. But there is a lot to be said for having synergy of colours throughout the different styles of living and style of architecture. Very good idea. People will probably regard it as being far too prescriptive, but without naming the particular buildings - we all know the ones where the majority of Islanders think the colours are frankly awful and are an embarrassment to the Island. So, yes, colour is really important. Are we doing anything about it generally? I think the answer is not much.

Mr. P. Nicholls:

I think just to add to the answer the Willie Miller urban design appraisal for St. Helier is an excellent example of a piece of work that has taken colour very seriously and, in fact, does give us a basis for a set of colour palettes for the town.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

But Willie Miller has never been implemented.

Mr. P. Nicholls:

It has not been implemented formally into policy but just to make the point that there has been some analysis done there.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

What is that because I am not aware as to what that is - Willie Miller?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

We will give you a copy.

Mr. P. Nicholls:

It is an excellent piece of work. It is a townscape and urban design appraisal of the whole of St. Helier.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

It is a really good piece of work.

Mr. P. Nicholls:

It is an excellent piece of work. It is a precursor to the EDAW work. The EDAW work does not duplicate it. We instructed EDAW specifically to build on and utilise the Willie Miller work. But colour is a difficult one because conventionally, in planning terms, colour, as you are implying, does not come under our control except under certainly in the UK there are colour controls within conservation areas clearly on this individual listed buildings. But more generally in conservation areas. So that is an approach one could consider moving into in Jersey, if it is seen as too bureaucratic to start to try and control colour generally at least start to do it in historic areas.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

You say you have not had control but from what I gather in horrendous stories - mind it does go back over possibly a long time, over many years but I mean there have been an enormous amount of people who have been told: "You have got to change. You cannot have red tiles on this roof. You have got to have green ones or you cannot have this. You have got to have that." So there has been a lot of control over a colour and it has upset a lot of people.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

That is different; that is a colour of a choice of materials. What we are talking about is what colour you can paint your house. If I want to paint my house bright purple tomorrow there is not much you can do about it.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But then on the other hand if you wanted to paint your colour bright yellow tomorrow it would not possibly exactly go but you have been instructed to have a green roof - green tiles on your roof. This is the point I am saying. You still control the roof colours, do you not?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, we control the roof colour when somebody makes an application but to paint your house purple you do not need to make an application.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

What about putting in tiles? Make the roof tiles a different colour.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But is it? No, that is the point. Is it okay from the colour point of view?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

No, it is not okay.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But if you are instructed by planning that you have got to have green roof tiles and you want your house painted yellow can you then go and paint your roof yellow?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Probably.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Pardon?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Probably.

Mr. P. Nicholls:

You would not normally need planning control to go and paint your roof.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Well, why control the colour in the first place?

Mr. P. Nicholls:

Fortunately, not many people do choose to go out and repaint their roof so it is quite effective. It will last a long time.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

What we are trying to do is to make sure that the colour of roofing materials by and large are appropriate for Jersey so they are terra cotta coloured pantiles, black slate-coloured slates and that they generally are

something that is sympathetic to the natural form and colour of the Island. But we cannot stop people painting their slate roofs bright purple if they want. I mean we have not got the control to do so at the moment.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Is that what you want to do with introducing this palette scheme, now? You want to introduce a system whereby in that area where you would normally see those kinds of colours you will only be permitted in the future or is it you are advising?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I think it should be you are advising.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Guidelines?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, that would be good.

Deputy S. Power:

If I could just give you a little insight, having been brought up in the west of Ireland, a lot of Irish towns and villages during the 1960s and 70s became terribly bland because of recession and depression and a number of other things. Gradually, towards the 1970s - late 1970s and early 1980s - they introduced colour into the streetscape of the towns and villages. Individual buildings with slightly different elevational treatments were painted in different colours. But then the local planning authorities and then the local Department of Planning allowed housing estates to be painted in different colours. Then, after the houses were painted different colours flower boxes appeared and all sorts of different things appeared and window shutters were put on and all sorts of little things were, but it lifted what were depressed, grey towns and villages into very colourful places to visit.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, I have been involved personally with one experiment like that in Jersey which is the York Street area, where we did bring the property owners together; we encouraged the property owners to use bright colours on the buildings and you will see, for example, where the Bessant(?) family have painted their buildings in bright colours and that was based on a palette actually. There was a palette of colours chosen and you combine that with a bit of soft streetscape and some public art and you end up with a completely regenerated area and the shop owners were saying that at the time that everyone else's sales were falling theirs were increasing. So it does work.

Deputy S. Power:

It works on the eye.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Right. It is said that the architectural heritage of a place is pretty much defined by the local building materials that have been used to build its housing or its building stock. Bearing in mind that there are kind of moves towards more liberal ways of living or organisation and layout, to what extent should there be an over-reliance on building materials that have been used in the past compared to more modern building materials? For example, in looking at some of the buildings in Vienna it was pretty obvious that in a lot of buildings instead of having a wall, for example, punctuated with windows possibly set out in a regular pattern with Victorian or Georgian sash windows, they had advanced to the concept of taking away the whole of the wall built in concrete or brick or stone or whatever and replacing it with a whole sheet of glass. So that obviously raises huge issues in terms of the style of the development that is being looked for overall within an urban area and the extent to which modern kind of forms of building would be allowed to be knitted in to those areas, if at all. My question really is do you think that a more liberal approach perhaps should be applied through the planning process in order to perhaps demonstrate the new materials in perhaps the creation of a go zone or a particular area where these modern styles, which will probably sit more comfortably together, give them an opportunity to be exhibited in one place rather than knitting them or trying to knit them into areas where perhaps their introduction might create a visual problem?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Long question; short answer. Yes. Jersey is, for most of us, defined by certain things like Breton cows, small fields separated by hedgerows and granite and we are never going to get away from that. That is what every picture postcard of Jersey since the Victorian days concentrates on one of those images with a bit of 14.30.47 (inaudible) thrown in as well. The reality is that we cannot suddenly dump all that and go for something else but we certainly can go through a process of gradually changing the buildings we deliver to more modern materials. So, as an example yesterday I approved in principle a very modern structure of predominantly concrete render but it has got a number of granite panels - not little sections of modern built grades, but flat faced regular granite panels to give it a feeling of local vernacular but it is a very modern interpretation and I think you can combine the 2 really well. I think modern materials and, fortunately, our traditional material, granite, go extremely well together.

Deputy S. Power:

Can I ask a supplementary on that? When we talk about the use of glass, stone, brick one of the things

that has been apparent to the panel in our accumulation of data on this is the treatment of windows on the Island, particularly in the last 20 years you have seen and I have seen in different jurisdictions how terrific some timber windows can be - double-glazed timber windows. We saw 20 year old windows last week in Vienna which had stood the test of time and we have seen timber windows double-glazed in Beddington in Z Bed(?) which are very serviceable, very high quality. It seems to me that one of the big areas that takes away from the external appearance of a building - a residential unit of accommodation and some commercial ones - is this proliferation of what I call variations in UPVC windows and there is a solution out there which we have not plugged into, the Island has not plugged into or the construction industry has not plugged into, which is finding windows which look reasonable, are high quality and work as distinct from PVC windows that work for 5 years and then all the hinges break and everything else falls off.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

You are talking my language. My view is that UPVC windows do nothing for most buildings. They are environmentally unfriendly; in a fire, as I learnt at one of the interactive talks the other day, they are extremely dangerous because they can give off all sorts of poisonous fumes. Their life is not as long as people expect and in most cases they do not do anything for a building. There are so many better choices. All over the world there are fantastic timber windows produced. There are composite windows as well that are metal and timber. You can have in timber windows all the advantages of other modern forms. You can have draught excluders, you can have fancy hinges and you can have them tilting and turning and twisting and whatever you want them to do, and they just look so much better for the vast majority of us who have to suffer pretty awful windows throughout much of Jersey and we should be doing whatever we can to encourage good windows. I have this morning refused some requests for reconsideration for UPVC windows for that very reason.

Deputy S. Power:

Yes.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Do you think when you say we should be doing everything we can; we touched upon an issue this morning that might stray into other areas when we talk about environmental savings and initiatives. But the area of grants - government grants or government subsidies or government levies in respect of not charging a planning fee for people that want to import these windows that perhaps may be a little bit more expensive than buying some off of the local tradesmen that are UPVC I suppose.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

They should not be any more expensive. They really should not be.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Really?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

There is no reason, if they are properly sourced, for them to be any more expensive than any other solution.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

So do you think we should be encouraging people through any kind of subsidy?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I think we should have a much better grant system; that is for sure. But I think that should be largely restricted to our historic buildings, however you want to define that, and we certainly should be encouraging people to put timber windows back in buildings that once had them. Unfortunately, as I understand it - Paul, correct me if I am wrong - the grant system at the moment is restricted in historic buildings to repairing timber windows. Now, we should be extending it from just repairing timber windows. I was told that somebody had applied for a grant and they were told they had to repair their windows and they were going to be given I think 1,000 grant and they just gave up in the end and got new timber windows. We certainly should be encouraging people in every way we possibly can and we will need to have a better grant system. But it is easy to say. The fact is there is not any money.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

One of the things you said, if I could just tack one last question onto this, because I think it is interesting how you are answering. One of the things you said was that we should be doing everything we can and they should not be more expensive if they are sourced properly. Is there any guidance or help the Environment Ministry can give in respect of educating the public perhaps via their website or something to show, as with the paint palette idea, that there are also - not necessarily promoting the companies - but showing the different availability of the products and the sorts of areas that they can be sourced from? Would that be something that would be helpful?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes. There is a note on windows that is quite good. I have got one ...

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Are you doing anything to promote that kind of education that one should be proactive ...

Senator F.E. Cohen:

That can be added to the ECO-ACTIVE website, for example.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

That is what they will do.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

And we need to have a section of ECO-ACTIVE that is all about environmentally conscious building. But again it is the resource problem where we did not expect ECO-ACTIVE to be as successful as it has been; we had it tough at the start; we were working part time. The idea was get the website out and launch the website and we will build it up over a period of time. Suddenly we found that we were a victim of our own success. We have not got the resources. We have not got the staff and we do not know what we are going to do at the moment. But, yes, it has got to happen. But we have got budgetary problems; we have been hit with other budgetary issues in the last few days and we do not have cash.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

But is HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation), as one of the sponsors, not saying that in their carbon neutral approach they are going to support people that are looking to make a positive impact in this area? Could they not be a source of funds.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

If you want to go and ask them for some more money. **[Laughter]**

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

More money for you.

Deputy S. Power:

One final comment on this, we have imported UK type windows, UPVC windows which I think were developed by hindsight has been a mistake and there are 2 conundrums which are outside the scope of this Design of Homes Review. One is - I would love to research windows properly as opposed to what is available on the Continent but - timber frame hardwood windows, and number 2 would be continental technology about subsurface car parking but it is outside the scope of this review. But I think that those 2 --

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Two very useful pieces of work.

Deputy S. Power:

Two very useful pieces of work, yes.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Right, Sean, you are the next question.

Deputy S. Power:

Right. Then we go on to carbon neutral. As you know, it is something that is close to the core of this Design of Homes Review and in the review we will be covering areas like insulation, both thermal and noise insulation, photovoltaic cells, some wind energy, recycling of grey water, rainwater harvesting and background heat recovery. How many applications have you had or how many applications have you been able to encourage that involve any or some of these areas?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, the answer is not much. I mean there is no point in sitting here and saying to you that we are at the forefront of encouraging applications that are environmentally sensitive because we are not and we should be doing it. The question is how to do it. Do we, for example, take on board the green principles? Do we green certify? Interestingly enough I had the first telephone call from a developer saying that he wants to devote the office building to the highest green standards because he believes that there is a potential to get higher rent from a green certified building. We need to do more. We are producing revised rules towards the end of the year and we will be doing more and it is an area that I will be tightening up on, but we are only just at the beginning of the journey and we certainly have not done enough. But we are going to do a lot more. I think that one needs to be a little bit careful at the moment. There is an awful lot of hype around, for example, carbon zero homes and I have read a couple of articles recently about it, and the reality is that it is very difficult to deliver a zero home. You can get quite close to it but you have got to set aspirations that are realistic and perhaps the thing to do is - though I do not know the answer yet - perhaps the aspiration is to set it as a 10-year plan and in year one try and deliver X percentage, year 2 an increased percentage until year 10 you get to your ideal solution. But what I have heard is that Gordon Brown's recent promise to zero rate carbon neutral homes is not going to cost him very much because very few people are able to deliver. There is a lot of talk, and I think we have got to be a bit practical to make sure that we set aspirations that are deliverable, but we have to improve insulation; we have to encourage micro energy whether it is photovoltaic, whether it is wind power generation. We are doing something with that in that we are finalising the planning exemptions so you do not even have to make a planning application. We should be encouraging geothermal but a lot of this, the real push of this will come from being able to implement, if we are, environmental taxes and using the environmental taxes positively to encourage people to introduce energy-saving measures into their homes because the vast majority of housing stock, of course, is existent. It is not just new stock we need to concentrate on; it is the existing stock as well.

Deputy S. Power:

Just moving away from the carbon neutral then and the zero energy development which is -- you are

right. It is a desirable thing. As to whether it is attainable at the moment realistically remains to be seen. But for a lot of SSIs (Sites of Special Interest) and BLIs (Buildings of Local Interest) that are on the Island who do want to achieve far more carbon efficiency is the department prepared to allow them to fit photovoltaic cells on roofs where they cannot be seen or wooden, double-glazing, sliding sash, if anything? It is an issue.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes. SSIs should be few, important and protected and I think, while you can give a little bit, there is validity for taking the view that preserving the building intact should be more important than looking at the optimum energy saving. So I think you have to strike a balance. Yes, you can promote better insulation in it. Yes, you can promote double-glazing, providing they are timber windows. We should also promote secondary double-glazing which does not interfere with the existing windows. But I think the concept of taking every SSI and covering them with photovoltaic cells and so many panels would meet too much resistance. I think you have just got to balance it and that is part of the job of a really competent historic buildings officer, and we have now got a really good historic buildings officer who understands the balance of these issues, understands that buildings have got to live, understands that we have responsibilities in terms of energy use, et cetera, and can throw all the balls up in the air and get them down in some sort of reasonable order.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I know it is straying a little, if not a lot, from the topic but in one sense I sent you an email after the ECO-ACTIVE launch in respect of how we, as the States, were trying to reduce our carbon neutral platform, as well as HSBC trying to drive to be chief in the environmental world. As Deputy Power says, it is desirable but perhaps unattainable at the moment. Is there any scope - with the prison, for example, it is a home for a lot of people. You know, it is a strange home for a lot of people, an unwanted home, but it is a vast home with a vast amount of energy on an exposed side of the Island that could potentially benefit from solar technology. Has that been advance by your department to the States' departments?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, as a result of the email I received, I have sent an email to the appropriate individuals to see what the chances are of having an audit of every publicly-owned building.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Fantastic.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

That is not in my charge. I cannot just decide the issue and I think that that is the way to go forward and

I am waiting to try and find a way of doing it. It is not something that you can just click your fingers and it happens. It is not something where you are going to be able to do every building in 5 minutes. It costs money to do the audit but you could, for example, start with simple programmes and sending out a list to all States' employees and saying: "In your building do you do the following: do you need to have the heating on quite as high as you do? Can you turn the computer off at night, please? Can you make sure that when you replace light bulbs that you use low energy light bulbs", all those sorts of things, gradually building through to a proper review of the best way forward with all States' buildings, bearing in mind that the Planning Department is in probably the worst, probably the most energy inefficient building on the Island, where the walls are literally an inch thin. My wall when it is windy the whole wall moves backwards and forwards; where half the rooms they have got the heating on and the air conditioning and we are probably the best case to start. So perhaps if we can get an environmental audit of all States' buildings we should be starting with us.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Could I just ask the Constable, bearing in mind that members have drifted across questions that have been asked by other members, whether or not any of the 3 questions that were pencilled in for him to ask whether or not he wishes to add anything and if not?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Well, the only thing I was thinking about, of course, obviously this annual plan is one that is going to be raised I would have thought for environmental taxes and that. That is the important part. But the one that I would like to come to really is regarding the improved noise and insulation required because it does seem to me at this moment in time that the insulation requirements, and possibly the noise requirements, are always of a minimum requirement and it tends to be that it is proved, because it is the minimum requirement that is. Do you feel possibly that these should be looked into more so and the minimum requirements should be raised as such.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Absolutely. Another case where we could do better and we must do better, we need to raise the standards of sound insulation to ensure that all modern properties enable the occupants to live reasonably in peace. Now, I am not sure that you are going to be able to sound insulate everyone against their neighbour running their hi-fi to 1,000 watts a channel but they certainly should be able to live without hearing the people next door chatting away. We must do better and, yes, we are going to.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

And from the insulation one as well, I think in the past and it has been mentioned that from our requirements, because we are not likely to get snow more often than once every 20 years or something, the insulation was always regarded on the heat and the coldness and such like. But I mean that really

should be more requirements arranged in that sense because it seems to me that the insulation really should be for the future more economic, and it raised again --

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Insulation is the best energy saving measure and we should be ensuring that new buildings are insulated to the highest standard and we should be working towards providing some form of assistance to retro-fit insulation but that can only come out of environmental taxes. The key to a lot of this stuff about changing the way people deal with these issues is around getting a formally hypothecated environmental tax that enables us to have some money, to put money behind the talk, and the problem at the moment is all we have got is the talk and people say: "Well, thank you very much. It is all very well for you but we are the guys who have got to pay for it and it is all very expensive."

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I can understand from solar panels and suchlike but would there be a vast increase in the cause to raise the standards of the insulation and noise levels?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Of new homes or of existing homes?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

New homes, primarily.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

New homes. Paul, can you answer that?

Mr. P. Nicholls:

I would have not thought a vast one, no, and, as has been indicated, we are looking at upping the building regs later this year on thermal insulation, and that will need to be done at regular intervals. It will affect cost but clearly it is the retro-fitting that gets really expensive when you have got to set up a - - but new ones. There is always a cost implication to these things but not huge when you are building a new house. Just to be fair to the building regs people on the sound insulation side, that is one they have looked at fairly recently and it is only in 2004 that the current standards were brought in, so it is relatively early to be judging how effective those new standards are but it is very much something that is being looked at.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I think this is one of the things that when you produce your response to the Design of Homes I think what would be very helpful is a hit list of things that you want sorted out so that we can sort it out.

Because effectively the design for homes should be a partnership where if you come up with something we should sort it out and if better sound insulation is something you want, stick it on the list.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But can you just sort it out just after we have given our report rather than before the report. It would take more glory [**Laughter**].

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The intention is not for glory. I am quite happy to have the partnership. You can have the glory.

Deputy S. Power:

One of the recurring themes that we have had to deal with in the recent past has been airborne noise intrusion both from within a building and at street level and it is something that we are looking at in some detail and it appears to be that they are both 2 modern problems. So we will pass on the details to you.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Okay.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Right, we missed a question so Deputy Le Claire, please.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

They missed me because I asked a supplementary on the [**Laughter**]. How should suitability and context of buildings be considered in relation to the streetscape and surrounding community?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, the design of buildings can only be - if the design is good, competent design - it can only be a response to the context in which the building is sited. So that means the streetscape and good design is about producing buildings that adequately and properly reflect the streetscape, and some of the new poor streets that we are building are poor because the buildings do not reflect the streetscape and we have - and I do not want to name the streets because we will end up naming the building - but we have got some areas of significant redevelopment where you have got 25 different buildings all constructed in the last 10 years with 25 different styles, none of which particularly reflects anything about the area.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Do you think that extends to the coastal regions and the specific hedges sites?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, it does. Well, if you have a look at Willie Miller. Can we get a copy to Paul of Willie Miller, please?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

If you get a copy to the Panel perhaps.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes. Well, we could give you all copies because I saw a big pile of them. If you look at Willie Miller, Willie Miller has identified certain vernacular styles in certain areas and they define the areas. But there are other areas where there are complete mixes and we need to, in the defined areas, really take Willie Miller on as policy and ensure that we protect the streetscape and the vernacular of those particular areas.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

So what you are saying is moving away from a guideline to a policy in respect of, like, you would not want, for example, a windmill stuck right in front of Mont Orgueil Castle because you would want it in keeping. You have got to look at the suitability and the context of the building but it has got to be, like with your painting palette, it has got to be in keeping with the area that it is meant for.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

You make a very realistic point about Mont Orgueil. I mean it may be that one day you do have to consider a wind power generator somewhere neat Mont Orgueil.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

But not stuck in front of it.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Not stuck in front of it but it depends on what happens to other energy supplies.

Deputy S. Power:

I think suitability and context also comes into massing and scale and there are a number of examples that you and I are both aware of, Minister, where the massing scale was inappropriate to the context and suitability of a particular site or a number of sites and that is part of it - massing and scale. You are dealing with one at the moment, probably more than one.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Many more.

Deputy S. Power:

Okay, again, relating to our recent experience in the UK and in Vienna, what do you think can be improved to increase living accommodation and space within the footprints allocated to individual units? We are back to loft style, open plan variations on the theme.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I think proper consideration of the allocation of space, a complete review of how houses are designed and how you allocate the space. I am not quite sure how you do that though. I think some of it will come out of the design guide and some of it will laterally come from reactions to developments like Spectrum. Whether you like Spectrum or you do not they have taken an alternative approach to the allocation on space, particularly in some of the smaller units with, for example, bedrooms delineated by glass structures and no doors. Well, do people like that; do they not like it? I think you will find that if people like it that will be reflected in the next scheme and if they do not like it you will find it gets dropped. So there is a long way we can go but I think it will be a gradual process of trying to lead applicants, architects and developers to look at new approaches and seeing what the reaction is, which is why I was, for example, so surprised that we got a bit of a negative reaction to going on the Vienna trip because how can anybody expect us collectively to bring new ideas if we do not look at other places where new ideas have been tried. You know there is nothing better than going and having a look at proven schemes in other places that are fundamentally different from anything we have ever tried in Jersey and trying to decide whether we could transplant them into Jersey either in total or in part. So, I think that is part of the process that will result in a more appropriate allocation of space for 21st century living.

Deputy S. Power:

Vienna represented a challenge on how you incorporate some of the stuff that we learnt. Now, we have certainly incorporated some of it into Design of Homes; certainly open living loft spaces, community lifestyles and even with the Church of God, which was the House of God, which I thought was -- which was pure fluke but ...

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, and I thought one of the best modern buildings I have ever seen. Well, I have been boring everybody stiff with the book I was given by Heinz and telling them how wonderful I thought the building was and I want one in Jersey.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, can I ask; well, leading on to all this reading and it just went through my mind the position regarding yourself of planning and the actual architects themselves, how can you get a configuration

between the 2 as such because, obviously, you have ideas that you have in your mind. But are you seeking to transfer the ideas to the architects or do you wait for them to be proactive, to come to you and you say: “No, no, no. I have got this in mind”? Because there are always the 2 aspects and I always have -- well, there are 3 aspects to a certain extent. There are yourselves, there are the architects and there are the developers because the developers are looking from a certain, basically monetary terms. The architects get kind of caught in the middle and you are on the other end and I am having difficulty on seeing how all this could be grouped together.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, you have hit on a very clever question because it is the trick to delivering all of this, and it is a matter of gradually bringing the architectural profession over to the side of better design. It is not an easy process and part of the problem I think is that architects in Jersey have particularly been prepared to compromise because their clients have told them to do so. One of the things I learnt with dealing with, for example, Sir Richard McCormack on a commercial building is that if his client tells him to do something that he does not want to do he will just say: “Get another architect” and, unfortunately, architects have got to pay the wages and pay for their offices and they cannot be too prima donna-ish about the work they take on. What we have to do is to somehow empower them to be able to say: “Look, Mr. Client, you may want to tell me to do this but I can tell you that if you do you are wasting your time because the Planning Department will not do it.” The way we are delivering that is by trying to work with particularly the president of the AJA, Mike Waddington, with whom I have pretty regular meetings, who is very enthusiastic about better design and he is then responsible for filtering the design guidance down to his members. We are injecting another process in the next few weeks. Because I have raised the bar - because we have raised the bar in terms of requiring better design - there are clearly a number of cheesed-off architects out there who have not got their schemes approved. What I am doing is giving them the opportunity of coming to see me as a group. We will meet somewhere or another and they will say: “Why did you not approve this scheme here?” and I will say to them: “Because of A, B, C, D and E” and I am hoping, while that is not going to be a terribly happy process for some of those who are objecting to what we have turned down, that it will enable them to understand more of what is required. But it is not easy. The design guide will help. The Design for Homes document will help but, as I said in the answer to one of the very first questions, these are not things that you can just compartmentalise. There is a lot of design and style and personal assessment involved in each case and it is difficult to filter it right through. What is clearly happening with applicants or agents - and I am not just talking about architects, I am talking about other agents as well because a large number of our applications are not submitted by a qualified architect, they are by technical designers and whatever - is that they are falling into 3 camps. They are falling into the camp who understands. They know what a design statement is. They understand they are required to produce a model. They understand that they have to produce materials that are appropriate and in a local context and they get consents relatively quickly. There is the mid group who, sort of, half understand and get it right half the time and there is

another group who do not seem to understand at all, and I do not know what the problem is but we have an SPG that says: "You are required to produce a design statement" and if you are the applicant's agent, presumably if you have seen the supplementary planning guidance you will produce a design statement but yet some of the applications have not got a design statement so they go straight back. So what we need to do is to try over a period of time grow the first group, make the second group as small as we possibly can and get rid of the third group so we convert all those in the third group into those who understand and it will just take time.

Deputy S. Power:

It might be also useful as an exercise - I do not know how practical it would be - to get every architect and self-professed designer in a room together and asking them to bring their best example of their work and their worst example of their work and see what the rest of them think.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Well, maybe we could do that as a joint exercise - very happy to do so. You know all this stuff, I know that there is this odd relationship between Scrutiny has got to stand over here and the department have got to stand over there, but as far as I am concerned we are all seeing from the same sheet and you are more than welcome to be involved in any of the work that we are doing. The offer is open for ECO-ACTIVE. There is space for you. You have even got a front page. You can have what you want on it. With all these policies the more help I get the better.

Deputy S. Power:

Okay. That is good.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Right. I think on that optimistic note I would like to thank you and your chief officer for attending and close the meeting. Thank you.