

## **2.8 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the proposed demolition of 12-14 Hilgrove Street:**

Would the Minister advise whether numbers 12 to 14 Hillgrove Street, St. Helier are considered significant in historic building terms and, if so, does he support the proposed demolition of them apart from the façades?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):**

Firstly, I would like to reiterate my commitment to the protection of historic buildings. I have made it very clear in the past that if a developer wishes to destroy worthy historic buildings they have the wrong Planning Minister and the wrong Assistant Minister. So far as 12 to 14 Hillgrove Street goes, I can confirm that these are registered buildings of local interest. The B.L.I. (Building of Local Interest) status affords protection to the exterior of the building but does not protect the interiors. Listing as a Site of Special Interest (S.S.I.) would extend protection to the interior, but I am assured 12 to 14 Hillgrove Street do not warrant such status. Indeed, I should point out that the recent examination has raised questions as to the historic significance of number 12 Hillgrove Street as quantities of chicken wire and metal lath are present in the façade. I am advised on the listing of historical buildings by the Jersey Heritage Trust in consultation with the Ministerial Registration and Listing Advisory Group. I am afraid that I cannot comment further on the proposals for 12 to 14 Hillgrove Street as the matter is soon to be considered by the Planning Applications Panel. However, in general my view is very clear: worthy historic façades must be protected and I know from personal experience that suitable engineering solutions can generally be found to achieve this.

### **2.8.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

I accept that the Minister is constrained by the fact there is a current application, but nevertheless is his personal view not that façade-ism on the whole does not do justice to important buildings, and we have very few early 19th century buildings left in St. Helier, but that we should be doing more to protect both the interior as well as the exterior of those we have?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

Yes, I do. We have a problem with our listing system and that is that we have only 2 methods of listings. One is a Building of Local Interest which lists effectively the exterior of the building and the other is a Site of Special Interest, and the criteria for registration as a Site of Special Interest are very strict. What I am looking at at the moment is completely revising the system and having a new structure with a grading system and work is ongoing in that respect.

### **2.8.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

It is interesting to hear the Minister once again outline his stand in respect of the preservation of historic buildings and it is one that is reassuring. In light of these questions that have been raised this morning what steps, if any, has he considered in respect of preserving the remnants of Wesley Grove Church?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

There have been a number of exchanges both this morning, last night and throughout yesterday in relation to the church building. I am in consultation with Marcus Binney who, as we all know, is a leading expert in this area. We are proposing to bring over an internationally-recognised surveyor to look at the structure and the owners themselves, as we speak, have a local surveyor on site. We will be doing everything we can to ensure that the remnants - the important remnants - of the structure are supported and are not allowed to fall down but, of course, public safety must play an important factor in this.

