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Design of Homes Scrutiny Review.

Section 1

Public squares and spaces are important to allow people to interact. However there must be people living nearby. We don't want a town deserted after 6 p.m.

The whole design must be people friendly as a top priority. To be useable in all sorts of weather is far more important than how it looks on an architects drawing.

Section 2

A garage is mainly used as extra storage space these days as homes don't generally have enough. I have no experience of using hidden parking but needs good lighting I imagine.

Jersey law specifically excludes traffic noise as a reason to complain about noise nuisance. There should be approved method(s) of traffic calming. Rumble strips cause a noise nuisance to neighbours.

I don't know the insulation standards used at the moment, but design should include a number of low energy factors, such as large south facing windows, smaller north facing, use of shutters, solar panels for water heating built into south facing roofs etc. KW-hours used per year should be as important a factor in house design as miles per gallon is for cars. A house is built to last for a generation or more and energy saving measures should be built in at the start.

People generally value living space and storage space for items like hoovers. Kitchen -diners are a good idea, but there should be a separate living room. Totally open-plan living space in family homes does not allow for some family members to be doing quiet work like homework, whilst others watch TV. Also cooking smells then penetrate the whole of the living area.

There should be space for a dining table so the family can eat together. The stairwell should be wide enough to take furniture upstairs. Access to the loft is also valuable to get items out of the way.

Our own house at [redacted], built 50 years ago, is a flexible home for life, enough space for two children as they grew up and can now take grandchildren for short periods. It needed external coating (or internal dry lining) as it was built single block and a downstairs toilet should be added. The same design was used at Beaulieu Park. .

Section 3

As cost is a big factor in Jersey, good modular design is very important to keep the costs down. It is cheaper to renovate an existing building than knock it down and replace it. Also older buildings were built with more space than many modern ones. There is no problem with adding solar panels and other environmentally friendly options during the building stage. They are much more expensive to add later.

Unused office buildings should be converted to living accommodation, especially for younger people or elderly, both benefit from not being far from shops and cinemas and other leisure facilities.

It is only recently that we have built on the look and not on efficiency. So I would say that embracing energy efficiency and environmentally friendly design is going back to traditional

values. We should also be including water efficiency, using grey water for toilets etc. Developers should have to fit into what the Island wants. The recent requirement for them to provide some 'planning gain' is the sort of thing that should have been demanded years ago.

We don't want a property boom in Jersey. We want serious thought about providing decent affordable homes for young people and others who have worked here and rented for years That is the real design issue.

Ed Le Quesne
Secretary of CTJ Housing Trust
11/1/07

Comments from Mr. David Letto, Manager of William Bull & Co, Estate Agents, who has many years experience in the Jersey property, *included with his permission*

Firstly, a typical question: "How fit for purpose are modern garages?" What sort of a question is this?

Secondly, the States will ignore the answers: "What should the Island be doing with unused office buildings in St Helier to facilitate urban regeneration". The answer is that the States should not be supporting the new office developments on the Island site or Esplanade car park site proposed by WEB but which will make a huge amount of money. Developers will always choose the easy option. When the old 'Island Plan' called for the 'office development area' to be contained within certain tightly delineated parts of the town, developers were forced to assemble difficult sites and build in run-down parts of the town. If such controls were still implemented, unused offices, which were unsuited to refurbishment because of inadequate floor to ceiling heights, would be redeveloped in to new offices. Trouble is, a lack of Planning control means offices are built over an ever wider area of St Helier - from the Jersey Financial Services Commission in Victoria Street to the extreme west of the Esplanade (the proposed redevelopment of the old Gasston pub on the corner of Kensington Place) to Green Street roundabout and even Harbour Reach at the Elizabeth Marina. Sites like these are simple to develop. A few years ago, developers would have to negotiate with a number of freeholders to assemble a big town site, as happened between the Esplanade and Commercial Street, for example.

Finally, I have sat on countless consultation panels set up by Housing, Planning etc If there are 15 people present, there are 15 (often radically different) views - the extreme right, the extreme left and

1. When I have read the conclusions drawn from these consultation panels, I am always convinced that the only purpose served is that the relevant department can say that it has "widely consulted" - prior to doing exactly what it wanted to do in the first place! Call me cynical!

Ed Le Quesne

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