

12 February 2007

Deputy S Power
Lead Member
Environmental Panel
Scrutiny Office
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
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APPROVED
MEMBER

Dear Deputy Power

DESIGN OF HOMES REVIEW

I write further to your invitation to attend a public hearing on Friday concerning the Design of Homes Review, unfortunately I will not be able to attend. I should point out that The Jersey Estate Agents Association, as a body has not considered or debated this topic so I could not possibly reflect an Association view.

However I am glad to give my personal opinion gained from 23 years in the business of renting and selling properties in Jersey and also in receiving opinions from the users, the people living in these homes.

I see the most important areas requiring consideration are as follows:

1. There is no doubt that size of homes, internal space, external recreational space is of paramount importance and it is generally felt that in more recent times unit sizes have diminished at a cost to family and social harmony. Minimum building standards on size of rooms has to be increased.
2. It appears that in an attempt to design and build affordable housing (or is it to preserve developers profit margin?) basic good design elements such as windows in kitchens and bathrooms have been designed out. There has to be a return to basics such as light requirements for the well-being of occupiers.
3. Motor vehicles are a fact of life but it seems great consideration should be given to screening or hiding parking for aesthetic reasons. Hidden parking is very acceptable
4. Space cannot be underestimated and in any built up area such as Town, space is essential for creating an individual character and identity, - green areas, parks and squares are essential for this, as well as for creating an identity and a sense of belonging for the inhabitants of the homes being created. Designs must incorporate the social needs of the people living in the homes.
5. The external appearance of homes should be considered in context of the surrounding area, though there is much more acceptance of more adventurous and modern interpretations.

6. Noise intrusion has started to be an ever increasing concern to people, without doubt exasperated by the higher density of units particularly in built up areas and despite modern building regulations sound insulation is very often poor in the most modern of apartment developments.
7. Whilst cost implications will have to be considered, very high consideration should be given to energy efficiency and environmentally friendly design. Despite the fact that many options such as geo-thermal core energy and solar panels have a high capital cost great efforts should be made to encourage and use renewable energy sources wherever possible, we have to start sometime as generally public opinion is for not against. Eco-friendly homes will be and is being seen as a positive selling point .
8. Sympathetic redesign of unused office buildings, commercial units, (“re-cycling”) might be a challenge but offers opportunities to create units of individuality and more unique appeal and on this point alone ways should be considered to make this viable.

Please accept my apologies for this rather late reply to your request for comment

Yours sincerely



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