

2.7 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the reconciliation of current planning considerations/restrictions with the agreed incinerator building:

How will the Minister reconcile current planning considerations/restrictions with the agreed incinerator building, particularly with regard to size and appropriateness of site without frustrating its development?

Deputy F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

This Assembly approved the location of the plant at La Collette. Outlined planning permission for the E.f.W. (Energy from Waste) plant at the La Collette was granted in October 2007. The outline permission established a building envelope that defined the maximum permitted size of the building. The plant approved by the States last week requires a building that is smaller than the building envelope allowed for. The outline planning determination took into account all relevant planning circumstances including the likely impact of the scale of the building. Many details of the building were reserved in the consent and these require determination. Transport and Technical Services will have to make a further submission now that they have the approval of this Assembly. The building envelope will be designed or critiqued by Hopkins Architects and I will be insisting on the very high standards of architecture and construction. Hopkins who last week received 2 further major architectural awards for the National Tennis Centre at Roehampton would not allow their reputation to be risked by submitting a detailed application for anything less than an architecturally exemplary building. Furthermore, I will be requiring T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) to appoint a landscape architect of renown to mitigate the impact through creative landscaping. While this building is always going to have a significant impact, it can still be a good building and be a positive contribution to our building environment. However, the delivery of this will require the determination to allocate sufficient funds for the construction of the building envelope. Cost-cutting in this area may lead to failure in terms of public acceptability of the building.

2.7.1 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:

I would like to ask the Minister, is it usual for Hopkins to act as architects for such buildings as an incinerator? Is this a one-off? Is this the first time they have ever been asked to act in that capacity?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

They are certainly not specialists in designing Energy from Waste plants, however, as I explained during the debate, the design is an evolving design that began to some extent with Glyndebourne and with one of the other industrial buildings they designed. It is a proven design in principle and has been very successful and the winner of a number of awards. That is the principle of the envelope. What goes inside the envelope does not matter whether it is an incinerator or a storage building. It is the envelope that Hopkins are interested in.

2.7.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I have no doubt that the building will be architecturally outstanding, Sir. Presumably it will all be in granite. But what I am concerned about is the conflict that the Minister may find himself in is that the building will have to be certain size and a certain size in order to be an envelope large enough to house that which this Assembly has agreed to build. What is the Minister's position should he find that such a building is larger than he would prefer to be built on the site? Surely there is a tension here.

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

Firstly, the building will not be built of granite. It would be an entirely inappropriate material for this type of industrial building, particularly based on this design concept. The building envelope is

already approved and was approved, as I have said in my answer, in October 2007. The envelope now proposed is smaller in size than the in principle approval.

2.7.3 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Would the Minister give us his views on whether a public inquiry would be appropriate as is taking place in many parts of the world before new E.f.W. plants are commissioned? We are aware that the Minister has asked that the Waterfront be the subject of the first public inquiry in Jersey. Should the E.f.W. plant not be the subject of a second?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

I have already given my view on this matter in 2007. It is my view that a public inquiry is not warranted on this application, particularly now as the envelope has been approved in principle.

2.7.4 The Connétable of St. Helier:

A supplementary please, Sir. The Minister will be aware that under the current Island Planning Law, a public inquiry is appropriate where there is a significant departure from the Island Plan and where the proposed development will have a significant impact on a large proportion of Jersey people. Does he not feel that notwithstanding his decision last year this current proposal still meets the requirements of the current Island plan?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

No, Sir, I do not.

2.7.5 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Given that this site is going to be so close to the Fuel Farm, and given that we have so many residents in that area, our experience yesterday I am sure shocked many Members of the Assembly including residents as to the extent of the smoke that was prevalent during yesterday's fire. Will the Minister take extra efforts, given the resulting smoke that we witnessed yesterday, in the consideration of the sizing of this building and the adequate protections from the environment and for the evacuation of those vulnerable people that may be living in that area should we witness something of a similar nature that would extremely impact upon a large residential neighbourhood? Would he care to comment?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

I think I need to be a little careful in my answer to this primarily because of my duties to remain impartial and to determine an application at the stage an application comes in, but a number of the factors that Deputy Le Claire has raised are of significant importance and will merit consideration at the time of determination.

2.7.6 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

Has the Minister given any thought to decorating the incinerator housing in the same manner as the Viennese one which is now a tourist site?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

The decoration of buildings is a very interesting subject. I am not sure that this is a matter for determination at this stage. There is great merit in decorating buildings in a variety of forms from graffiti to formal decoration. What would be appropriate for this building I think is a matter to be determined at a later date and of course depends on the principles of design evolving from the architects.

2.7.7 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Given that it is very difficult to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, would the Minister confirm that the involvement of Hopkins in the incinerator construction has been good value? Would he

feel that perhaps their continued involvement is only adding additional unnecessary cost to the detriment of other aspects of the Transport and Technical Services' requirements?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

This is a very interesting question. I am glad to have the opportunity of making this absolutely clear. It is my view that if we are to build a building of merit that Islanders do not detest, that we need to build a building of architectural merit. That requires architects of competence. I believe investment in architecture and investment in quality of materials and high standard of construction is absolutely paramount in this case and in the case of other large buildings. Quite honestly, if it costs a bit more that is an investment for our future generations.

2.7.8 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am grateful for the Constable of St. Brelade's question because mine is very much akin to that. The Minister has mentioned about Hopkins. It would appear that Hopkins is going to do everything down there. Can I ask what consideration has been given to other people having an opportunity maybe to lend their skills and expertise in developing that area?

Deputy F.E. Cohen:

It is not for the Minister for Planning and Environment to choose the architect. All I have said is that I have chosen Hopkins to critique the scheme on my behalf. That is my decision. I am perfectly satisfied that they will do an excellent job. They have the reputation and have delivered fine buildings all over the world. You could always go to other architects. You could have gone to any number of major architects in the U.K. and in Europe but while the cost of the architecture is not a matter for me to consider, I have found so far that the work Hopkins have done for the Planning Department has been very good value. I am quite surprised at how low the cost has been.