

# 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:**

Mr. M. Waddington

Mr. C. Buesnel

Mr. P. van Bodegom

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

If I could call the meeting to order, I have to read the convening notice for witnesses who are not States' Members. It is important that you fully understand the conditions under which you are appearing at this hearing. The proceedings of the panel are covered by parliamentary privilege through Article 34, States of Jersey Law 2005 and the States of Jersey (Powers and Privileges and Immunities) (Scrutiny Panels, PAC and PPC) (Jersey) Regulations 2006 and witnesses are protected from being sued or prosecuted for anything said during hearings unless they say something that they know to be untrue. This protection is given to witnesses to ensure that they can speak freely and openly to the panel when giving evidence without fear of legal action, although the immunity should obviously not be abused by making unsubstantiated statements about third parties who have no right of reply. The panel would like you to bear this in mind when answering questions. The proceedings are being recorded and transcriptions will be made available on the Scrutiny website. Could I just ask you that when you are speaking to speak to the microphone so that we can obtain a decent copy? Design on Homes Review has been going on for a little while now. This is the first hearing. We want to put a little bit more flesh on the bones and Deputy Sean Power has come forward with a list of outline questions that we would like to flesh out today. We will kick off by Sean asking the first question.

**Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade:**

This is a generic question. You have been quoted in the media, Mike, a couple of times, as to what you think is good design in Jersey and what you think is not so good design in Jersey. I am not going to pin

you to those comments.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Thank you.

**Deputy S. Power:**

But if you were in an ideal world and you had a say tomorrow as to what would be the one thing, or the top 2 or 3 things, that you would implement straight away to improve the way we design homes generically in Jersey - by homes, I mean a unit of accommodation whether it is a flat, a house or whatever - what would be the 2 or 3 things that, if you were in charge, you would change?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Well, a couple of things occur to me that could be improved. Probably the first one, I think most local architects - if not all architects working in Jersey - come into contact with which I feel is an area where improvements could be made would be to encourage the Planning Application Panel to better understand and maybe better embrace good design and, in some ways, better embrace and better understand contemporary design. I do not think it is a criticism in the least. It is a complicated area; architects struggle with it. But possibly there is a disparity between the Planning Department's aspirations for improved design and the ultimate public interface with the Planning Applications Panel. So that would be an area where certainly I think the association would welcome some opportunity to kind of cross-fertilise ideas and try and, sort of, just get that that discussion going. The other thing that occurred to me which would be interesting is that Hopkins, originally the waterfront supremo and latterly the waterfront master planners, have obviously approved the Les Pas site, one of the biggest sites on the waterfront. It would be very interesting, I think, for people to perhaps understand the criteria on which they based that decision. Presumably, as we understand it, as supremos, they are in some ways the authors of some kind of quality guideline in terms of design. What were the criteria? We were unaware that the criteria had been made public, but it certainly would be very interesting to get a better understanding of what they thought constituted presumably better design for what would be one of the largest sites in St. Helier. So, they struck me as a couple of pointers.

**Deputy S. Power:**

When you say that Hopkins have approved a master plan for the Les Pas site, that means they have approved a generic general architectural scheme for the thing, as distinct from detailing it?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I am not sure. It is very difficult to tell from what we have seen in the press the degree of detail in the application. We certainly saw quite an elaborate computer model, but it seemed to me that these processes are going on. They are going on in the Planning Department day on day, with the Minister's

design principles. Obviously Hopkins are applying some sort of design guideline criteria to schemes. These things are going on, but perhaps what we are not very good at is bringing them together in one sort of understandable format, so people can see if we do something this way it is generally going to be seen as good design, perhaps another way it is not.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Mike, in America - I had a look on the internet - they have living space standards where they refer to the amount of square footage per person. We have similar rules of thumb in Europe and in Jersey. What was particularly surprising was that over the last 20 to 30 years, the living space standard for American houses has gone from 450 square foot per person up to between 750 and 900 square foot per person. The average house for 2 people, the standard that is desired is around about 2,000 square feet. Looking at the European figures, it would appear that the UK appears pretty close to the bottom of the living space square footage standards. What would you consider to be an adequate size for units of accommodation for single people or couples or families in that respect?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

It is probably not surprising that the US has increased provisions, given the amounts of land they have, compared to a restricted island. I think we are always going to have to juggle the land shortage, the pressure not to develop in green areas of the Island and to intensify urban areas. That automatically is probably going to suggest that unit sizes are not going to grow dramatically. One thought that did occur to me in terms of tight urban living, which is probably an area that most of us are quite interested in, is that we are not particularly good at learning from what we have done. There are a couple of schemes that come to my mind, one of which we were involved in, which is the Berkshire Court over-50s development where the units, I think, are 450 or 500 square feet for a one-bedroom flat, which is small. It is absolute bare minimum on the standards and it was intended to be so. The other one is the Spectrum Development. I would think a useful starting point would be to try and get an understanding, feet on the ground, do those developments work? In the case of Berkshire Court over-50s: relatively old, out of fashion, deck access, circulation, a couple of lifts, I think, a couple of stairs, and a private courtyard. What is the feedback? Do people feel secure? Do they feel happy and comfortable in that? In the case of Spectrum, as I understand it, the premise was to get people on the property ladder. How many of those units have been sold for investment and therefore are being rented? How many have put people on the property ladder? They are both equally small schemes. There is a shortage of parking in town and Spectrum has a very innovative car share scheme which came into the press recently. What is the feedback? Are people buying the spaces with Spectrum units? Are they being rented to office developments? Who knows? I do not know. But it seems to me that as a starting point we have some quite good raw material just to test what tight urban living means. The only other thing that crossed me, looking at these questions, was when we talk about how big a unit should be. Certainly, in America they talk about square footage; so do we. As you probably know from Vienna, in Europe they talk about

volume and I think that is a really interesting third dimension that we rarely explore. I mean, you can have a tight urban unit, but maybe with a double height space and a small balcony and a bit of roof deck. Suddenly - it is a bit like this room - it does not feel like you are in a very tight space if you have a nice, high ceiling somewhere. So, I think that is an area that a lot of developers have not fully explored and I know in the UK, certainly with loft style living, that is one key selling point. You sell people volume, very often volume with no fittings in it. They do their own kitchens, whatever. It is a way of perhaps economically delivering better space standards.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

There has been a revision of the building bylaws and the rules and regulations governing the spaces available for people. Do you think that the figures that have been published are around about the right sizes or would you be arguing, as a professional body, for an increase?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

I think they are probably about the right size. I think a lot of it comes back to what Mike was saying about the inventive design that is applied to those areas. Mike made the point about the high ceilings. I personally used to live in a little 2-bedroom Victorian house in town and it did not feel small at all, because it did have the high ceilings. But it is also the silly little things: most people now are buying flat screen plasma TVs, so your lounge areas, all of a sudden you are not having to accommodate a TV with a big huge back inside of it here. So, technology is always moving forward and it is helping us. The space that we utilise in our homes is getting bigger because technology is getting rid of furniture and things and TVs is an ideal point, really. So, I would say that the sizes seem to be - as the DOP (Department of Planning) have proposed at the moment - appropriate. They do show, I think, a 5 per cent or 10 per cent increase on the current standards. That, coupled with the lifetime homes provisions, will add another percentage on as well, so that does seem to be going in the right direction.

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

I would like to ask, if I could, about amenity space. Maybe if you could speak about what you consider to be the issues surrounding amenity space and whether or not there is adequate attention being given to that at the moment.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I do not think there is adequate attention being given to it at all. I think we are desperately keen to have some better guidance in terms of what size garden is suitable, and I did a bit of ready reckoning. I was thinking back to the flat we lived in in London and it had a tiny, postage stamp - 75 square metres, I think - back garden. It struck me that some useful potential guidelines for living units could be that if you are in an apartment you need a balcony; maybe 10 to 20 square metres would be adequate. If you are in an urban house development, you might need a roof deck or a roof garden and something like 25

to 50 square metres might be a range to consider. I think there is no question that gardens of 50 square metres, particularly if the plot width is relatively wide, create a sort of strip of garden that is not ideal and perhaps a suggestion would be something closer to 75 to 100 square metres. I then started to think, hang on, if we are talking about gardens that are much bigger than that, we are perhaps into an issue of land sustainability and how do we offset that? What do we do? Supposing we were to have a 200 square metre garden, would that be appropriate? One of the things we tested out in the office over the last couple of days was how much space do you need to get a trench laid, a slinky coil geothermal heat recovery system into a domestic unit? The advice we had was 250 square metres. Now, the reason for that is, if the geothermal - as I am sure you know - basically it takes the heat from the ground and relies, during summertime, on your garden warming up again. For the first year it will work fine if you have a small garden. The second year it just cannot warm up enough over the summer. So, over a series of years the efficiency drops considerably and basically, it just stops working. So, the advice we have had is you need that size garden. It seems to me there is a real conflict between providing a garden that big and wise land usage, and one of the thoughts we had was maybe it is appropriate, if we are going to take an environmental strand - and this is for a 4-bedroom house, the 250 square metres - that we consider perhaps redundant glasshouse sites as offering bigger gardens. But the payback, if you like, to the Island is that they then embrace better sustainable design within their heating systems. So, there could be an answer to say that: "Develop the glasshouse site, but the gardens need to be 250 square metres and we want geothermal." We recognise those are fringe sites. They are not attractive. They are certainly not built-up area, but they are also not green zones. So, maybe that is the sort of thinking we need to have. Then I also struggle with this concept of perhaps anything other than social housing needing big areas of communal space. You know, one wonders, how do they get maintained; how do they get used? Do they become an antisocial element, because there is the possibility of teenagers kind of invading them, and certainly - and I am sure Paul and Colin would agree - in the private residential schemes we deal with, there is never a requirement for that.

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

I have a lot of experience from different parts of the world. I lived in Canada for 10 years. So there are different areas and different utilisations of spaces and I do take on board what you are saying in respect of do they become problem areas by setting them out as areas for children to play in or congregate in? There is an issue, I feel, though within the town, especially that there is insufficient utilisation of areas for provision of play areas for children and I wondered if maybe you can just touch upon that, and also ask you, from your answers so far, one common theme seems to be coming through which is there does not seem to be a set playing field. There does not seem to be the guidance in all of the areas that you have been asked to speak to and it would appear that everybody is playing, but nobody has some ideas as to where the boundaries are or how long we will be playing for or who is on the other side and what is against the rules. Is that one of the major problems?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Absolutely, I mean, that is before we even move on to parking standards.

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

It is hard to play a game when no one has defined the width of the pitch, the length of the game and the number of players, et cetera.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

It is complicated, and as you can well imagine, a site is a certain size, you apply certain parking standards to it, garden sizes, you are left with a residual amount of land for building on. That affects values and it is terribly hard. One thing that I suppose has dogged a lot of the social housing schemes is that it appears the mechanism for preventing land values being driven up has not existed and the pinch is on at both ends, effectively. There is a selling price of whatever it is, £280,000, I think, is it not?

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

What do you think would resolve this issue? Who could resolve it in respect of setting out the guidelines and how would it be resolved, in your opinion?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

It should not be complicated. It should be policy guidance notes that fit the Island plan and if room sizes, garden sizes, parking provisions are felt to be inadequate, then I think there needs to be an intelligent debate and quick resolution, and as I understand it, Design for Homes has been kicking around for nearly 2 years now in its draft form.

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

Is there a problem with communication?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

I think part of the problem with the supplementary guidance with the Design for Homes is that it is too big a document and it tries to be all things. In one document, it has tried to answer every single question and it just cannot do that. Instead of breaking it down into sections like the parking and dealing with that as a fundamental issue, which can then be incorporated into an Island-wide strategy for buses and all those kind of things, it has tried to do parking. It has only covered half of the Island in that document as well. It suggests things such as reduced parking if you are on established bus routes and all those kinds of things, which I think is a good idea, because it encourages people to use buses, it encourages cycling and all those kind of things, but it has only been done as half a job. So, the volume of that document does not help us.

**Deputy S. Power:**

I think it is probably exasperating for people in the professional end of it, because if this has been going on since 2004 - part of this document came out at the end of 2004, and it has gone through 2005 and 2006 - and it is about time there was a template put down, so you can all relax and at least we know that this is what people have to adhere to.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Someone else in the association made the point a while ago that one of the things about that document is that it does not appear to be inspirational either. We accept we all need guidance and there needs to be standards set down without ideally being totally prescriptive. But the feeling you get, having waded through it, is not one of: "Yes, I feel we are going somewhere" which I feel it would be great if there could be some component that gave people a feeling of a positive way forward. There is all sorts of things being talked about the environment, and the impression with housing is it just always seems to be seen as a problem rather than an opportunity.

**Connétable K.A. Le Brun of St. Mary:**

Yes, you touched very briefly on the size of homes before and that was from lifelong homes. What proactive action are you taking at the moment to think about the designs for the properties to be used as lifelong homes? Is this a feasible proposition or do you think that it is something that, shall we say, has just come about, because lifelong is an awful long time? Is there any proactive action being taken in regard of this respect?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

Well, we have the new bylaws which are up for consultation at the moment, are they not? They are due to be adopted in March - I think, is it March - with a 2-month period before they are fully implemented. Clients are coming to us at the moment and they are asking us to incorporate obviously all the lifetime homes requirements in at planning stage now, so they are not going to fall foul of the building bylaws in however long, 6 months' time, by the time it comes out of planning, if we are lucky. But a lot of it in that document focuses heavily on somebody who is going to end up in a wheelchair and that seems to be the whole focus of that document. It wants provision for stair lifts and it also wants provision for through-floor lifts. All of the electrical sockets are at certain heights and things and everything is geared, bathroom design and toilet design, to allow for people in wheelchairs to stay in the houses. I would question as to what research has been done to say that if every house has to have all of that, what would be the percentage of people who do end up in wheelchairs and stay in the home? It seems that they just focus on one issue and that is a person in a wheelchair, not other disabilities and other things for elderly people who might not be in chairs. I am sure there are other --

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

The visually impaired, yes.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

I think it is feasible to do a lifelong home within monetary restraints and suchlike, because it would of necessity be a whole life. It would go against the image of getting their first foot on to the ladder and moving into the bigger place and so on. It should be, as it says, for lifelong, irrespective of the person's ability.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

Yes, but you should not have to have every single house designed as a lifetime home, because it stagnates the market. As you say, you get your foot on the ladder and then you move up and you move up. Not everybody; the first house they buy is not going to be the house that they die in. That is just not the way we work now.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I think that is right and I think also the idea of flexibility and adaptability does come with a price. I think it is terribly hard to imagine a very tight, very low cost residential unit being capable of becoming a lifetime home within realistic parameters. I think we do need to allocate areas and I think it is inevitable that to create lifetime homes, the plots will need to get bigger, the houses will need to perhaps get a bit bigger, the stairs wider, just to simply withstand the sort of adaptation that they are likely to need during that course.

**Deputy S. Power:**

It might be fair comment to say the document you are referring to is almost a straight lift out of stuff that was produced by the Peabody Trust or Joseph Rowntree Foundation, because they have a whole book on lifetimes and when you look at access to stairwells, front doors, angles of approach, circulation areas upstairs, lifts, floors, how it works, and it is, to a large extent, they are talking about the wheelchair user and the young girl with the buggy and that kind of thing. One wonders whether it needs slight adaptation.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

Well, it has been cherry picked from our one. Our one is a combination of the UK's one, and they have cherry-picked certain elements out of each. But it was just a question of whether it should be applied to every single house. It just seems that it does force every single house to be a lifetime home from this point onwards, and is that appropriate?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

It becomes interesting to apply that to urban units. One thinks of a lifetime home front door, perhaps



ground floor access, all the rest of it. How do you integrate that into a vibrant townscape, where most of the accommodation is going to be above the ground floor level? So, there is the prospect perhaps of live/work units, which have not surfaced in Jersey in a big way yet, and really, there are some solutions there; some lateral thinking in terms of planning flexibility, zoning, could encourage that sort of use. It would be very tempting to think that the town park might be a catalyst for some of that thinking.

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

It is very artist-driven, is it not, those types of spaces? I lived in one in Canada. One side was a framing shop and the other side was a space that was just a bare shell that many people who occupy these type of premises are happy to move in. They have a toilet, they have a sink; they do not necessarily have a window, but they have a large space where they can lay out their furniture in any way they want to; put their bed in one corner or in the middle or those sorts of things. There are lots of empty offices, it seems, and spaces that could be used and are not, because of no flexibility, as you say.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Certainly one of the things I remember talking about a while ago in a planning discussion was the idea of doing what they call in America “go zones” in town. They are intended to stimulate tourism, but they could stimulate anything. It would cost the States nothing to introduce St. Helier go zones, and they would have to entail some positive planning uplift, flexibility, maybe some - dare we say it - flexibility on heritage and listings. There are quite a few restrictions and I am not suggesting the lock stock demolition of lovely old buildings, but just intelligent flexibility. We sort of want to have our cake and eat it and I think some of these things are going to have to be relaxed otherwise we are not going to get, effectively, the commercial interest. That is what it is going to boil down to.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Moving on, you mentioned the design aspects of sensible use of gardens, double height spaces and balconies and you also mentioned that flexibility comes at a price. What aspects of design currently applied could be changed to use space more flexibly? As people’s usage of space changes with time, we have seen things, for example, where specific places for sleeping were not provided - if you go back far enough - to bedrooms being provided, to bedrooms being now tagged on to bathroom accommodation and kind of work/office type accommodation as well. So, the whole of the usage function of rooms is changing with time. How do you think that the designs should be considered in order to build in this flexibility and to use the spaces more effectively in the long term?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

One thought I had was; do we really want to continue with this obsession with en suite bathrooms? I mean, all of our clients - I have to be careful what I say, I suppose, really - consider those to be marketable kind of things to put into houses.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Yes, and fancy kitchens.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

But I think personally kitchens are very important and perhaps more attention should be paid to them being part of the sort of heart of the house, but the endless en suite bathrooms, apart from just water usage and sustainability, clearly will have an impact on the size of the other rooms and I wonder whether perhaps that is a problem.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Do you think this Victorian idea of partitioning rooms and specifically designing them to be the living room, the parlour, the hall, the kitchen and the this, the that, the other, is a sensible design option?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

I think it comes down to personal taste, really. Some people really like the fact of having a separate dining room and other people are not that bothered and they would much prefer to have a combined living space. It depends on how we function. My wife personally loves having a separate dining room and she likes the whole principle of formal dinners with kids and all that kind of stuff. There is a little table in the kitchen for lunches and those kinds of things, but it comes down to personal taste, I think. It is not something that could be prescriptive.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Can I give a specific example here? We were fortunate to be in Vienna last week and we saw a community housing scheme, part funded by the City of Vienna and part funded by private finance, and in that they have very small units of accommodation, I am talking of about 40 square metres. But what they did was exactly what you are talking about. They provided amenity areas within the building, which meant that if you were in a 40 metre square unit, you had a facility where there was a library, there was a recreation area, there was a kitchen and a dining area, which means you could bring in 10 friends for a birthday party, there was a pool area, there was a small entertainment area, and it worked. The impression it gave me was that you can get away, in certain situations, with a very small flat, a very small bedsit, as long as you have recreational area within the building. We will include a section on that in this. It moves away, Mike, from what you said about the prescriptive nature of what we are trying to do in Jersey and it throws it back to the architect and lets the architect or the designer come up with innovative schemes. Would you think there is a market or is there an opportunity in Jersey for that kind of thing?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

I think there is, but it would have to be marketed. You would have to put the right people into those buildings who would buy into that as a system, same as Spectrum with the car sharing and those kinds of things. It is getting the right people into those kinds of developments that are into a bit of, as it were, kind of communal living.

**Deputy S. Power:**

They had a fairly strict Residents' Association and a lot of interest in the Residents' Association, and I hasten to add, a lot of social responsibility, and I think that maybe --

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I think that is absolutely critical. I think European urban living is a step change away from what we are used to here and it relies on quite a lot of social responsibility. That is why I go back to perhaps the suggestion that we research what we have already built and have an honest post mortem. Has it worked? How could it be improved? What are the good parts? What are the bad parts? I certainly think it would be fantastic to think about areas around Gas Place, which are not economically particularly attractive to private developers, being developed in a way that allowed people to have their first home and enjoy the sort of amenities that they should have, but at a low cost. I think that would be a great thing and shared equity is clearly one way of achieving that.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Leading on from the use of space, we have seen a number of large social renters and private first time buyer developments recently complete on the Island and there was an obvious lack of soft landscaping and an obvious lack of public amenity spaces. This tends to endorse the view that there is a lot of mediocrity in a lot of the design that goes on. As designers, do you feel that we keep missing this opportunity to soften some of these developments with fairly innovative landscaping and soft scaping, or is it down to budgets again?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Yes, I think is the answer to that, most likely. It is down to budget, of course it is, and it is down to planning tenacity to ensure things are delivered, the right weight of kind of people feeling it is appropriate to have good landscaping right at the beginning of the design. It is always disappointing to go around a scheme that you may have designed, or someone else has designed, and see kind of 2 or 3 skinny saplings struggling to grow in a sea of car parking which is effectively what very often happens. So, it is absolutely critical that we get that right, I think. The last lot of rezoned sites did pretty well to at least suggest approximately 10 per cent of open area for communal use. Whether or not the schemes address those communal areas in the correct public/private way so that you have some sense of surveillance to them, some sense of buffer space and privacy to the units that fronted them is another question, but certainly landscape is pretty critical, I think.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Picking up on this point about car parking, do you think we have a preoccupation with car parking, in laying out the designs for housing estates or accommodation, we tend to put in the parking and road provision first, rather than thinking about the private and the soft landscaping and the public amenity spaces for the people who are going to live there first?

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

I think so. I think there is far too much emphasis on car parking and that drives a scheme. Just going back to homes for life, the other aspect to somebody buying a house and growing with a house and having the flexibility to extend and go into the roof space, there is always this looming requirement of additional car parking because you have created additional car parking space. But if it is a home for life, take that away. Do not make that a requirement. Obviously it needs careful zoning, as Colin says, on bus routes, and say to people: "Okay, in these areas, you can have less car parking but you can have bigger gardens, the flexibility of extending the house without being penalised and having to be insistent upon creating more car parking. Let us have 2 cars for 4-bedroom houses and then give the space over to amenity space, to communal areas; put people on buses." Environmentally, it is far more sound.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

It is certainly very hard to see how, generally speaking, a 4-bedroom house would really have the need for 4 car parking spaces, but that is, generally speaking, what we are required to do. There has to be some commonsense applied to really what does go on. There has to be some research. How many 4-bedroom houses really have 4 cars in the forecourt?

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

We do not know how many 4-bedroom houses there are.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

That is a starting point, yes.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Some of the schemes we saw in Vienna took the innovative approach of putting the car parking element underneath the whole development and then having a pedestrianised platform for people to enjoy. Would you have any comments on that and its applicability for Jersey?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I have been a fan of underground parking for a long time and was extremely concerned when the 2002 Island Plan decided that for reasons of waste disposal and some bizarre reason of --

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

La Collette 2 filling up too fast.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

That, and also the presumption against private car parks made that very difficult. Obviously, there is a responsibility in terms of spoil, I understand that, but there is also, I think, longer term. I am particularly thinking about office buildings, but it could equally apply to housing. There is a whole element of accommodation that we might otherwise miss out on once we build a building at ground floor and to think about coming in later and putting a basement in, you will know from Canada it is a very common thing. I just think we have the technology, even if in our children's lifetime cars start to disappear, there is still space that is valuable and I think the likelihood is cars will not disappear in Jersey. They will just simply change fuel and become less of a worry in terms of atmospheric pollution, but still be a transport necessity. I think it is a great idea to somehow separate the potentially dangerous vehicle activities with young children being able to enjoy housing areas and play freely. I think it would be absolutely great, but there is obviously a cost to that.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

By example, where I live, it is all underground parking and then the remainder of the development is communal landscaped gardens, and it is great because the children can just happily run around the communal gardens. All the parking is underneath. They are kept well away from the traffic. Visually, you do not have a sea of car parking in what is quite a pretty development. Colin will know this, because Colin designed it, down at Les Arches.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

So, people first and cars second.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

Exactly.

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

I would like to talk about whether or not we could do anything to improve privacy for residents and just to lead you in, if I could, privacy is a very important thing for humans in some respects, from a health perspective anyway. But obviously, it means different things to different people, not only from a personality issue, but also from a cultural perspective. If you go to Amsterdam or somewhere like that, you will see in Holland they have these huge glass windows with their curtains wide open and they are running around going about their daily business in their homes with everybody, all and sundry, seeing what they are doing and they are not bothered by it. It is almost a way of life. In Jersey, there have been

a lot of concerns in the past about developments appearing overlooking somebody's garden, looking into somebody else's window. What do you think needs to be done, if anything at all, about improving the privacy?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

I think it is one of these things that whenever you do a development, you always have everybody, all the neighbours, saying: "What about my privacy? What about my privacy?" I have a fundamental problem with that as being an argument for stopping development anyway, because if somebody has nothing better to do than to stand at their bathroom window looking at an oblique angle at somebody else's property, they are going to do that no matter what. It is an attitude that has to be addressed, rather than it being something that stipulates that your building has to be 30 metres away from the adjacent site and you have to have barriers that are 2 metres high, or if your building is 20 metres, the barrier has to be 10 metres high or whatever it is, which is what is suggested in the Design for Homes. I think it has to be addressed more as a cultural issue, and if somebody is going to look at you, they are going to look at you.

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

That is an external consideration which I can appreciate.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

But it is also from first floor windows and things.

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

What about internally, when we talk about privacy within the home, within each other's households, so between the daughters, between the fathers, between the mothers, between the sons? In my view, in Jersey, there are a lot of families that are living in very cramped conditions and obviously struggling for privacy and space and those sorts of things. Do you have any thoughts about those? I mean, obviously with homes it is a different concept, but there is an external aspect to privacy, there is also an internal space issue with regards to privacy in Jersey, and in our context we have a very different homes market in the first instance. What do you think about the issues of privacy in the homes? Could they be defined and improved by better guidelines, more large spaces, separate areas, as spoken about? Any thoughts on this?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I do not know. I was thinking that a lot of this has to do with the way in which family units are changing anyway. I think with modern building techniques we can create bedrooms that are reasonably well acoustically insulated and obtain the privacy that way. But it seems to me the ground floor area, where perhaps family life goes on during daylight hours is something that is something that is never

thought about particularly well, unless perhaps you are doing a private house for a family that you get to know and then you start to understand how they live. Most people, we are finding, live very simply and they live around their kitchen area, their main living spaces, they watch TV together, and hopefully, they share a meal once every couple of days. But can I just say something about the external privacy? It struck me that since the planning process has become open and public - and I am not going to bang on about third party appeals, I promise - we have a situation where the tail is wagging the dog. We have some very highly qualified professional planners in the Planning Department, capable of making sound planning decisions on issues like privacy separation. They are being prevented from doing that because we are finding that one or 2 vociferous neighbours, who could have reasonable grounds for complaint or may be slightly obsessed by privacy - which I think a lot of people are; perhaps have too much time on their hands, whatever - are being given the megaphone, effectively. We are seeing perfectly reasonable schemes being refused simply because, in a difficult situation where the planning machinery is public and you are faced with highly knowledgeable locals who obviously know their back gardens and areas possibly better than the architects or the planners, they are skewering the process a little unfairly and they are costing us, I think, valuable accommodation. So, I think there is a balance in that.

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

Can I ask one question? I am not really meant to be asking too much on this one, but I think it just sort of leapt out of your answer really, and I have been thinking about this, anyway. You are having perfectly reasonable schemes refused because of the tail wagging the dog. How many times, through lack of guidelines and through lack of functioning or functionable planning process and a design criteria, do you think the architects in Jersey and properties in Jersey are delayed and cost is added because of unreasonable denials in respect of approvals?

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

It is a lack of clarity.

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

What is the driver and how much is it costing industry, do you think? The amount of time you have to go back and the time, not necessarily the application costs?

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

It is inflationary. You know, the time that a project is conceived to the time that it is completed can be years.

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

3 years, 4 years sometimes?

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

When realistically it could be a lot quicker and we could make this housing available to the market.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I believe the trend now is almost entirely buying sites subject to planning permission, rather than perhaps using their experience to say: "I am sure we could get 3 houses on this site. I am happy to purchase it on that basis" because there is such a degree of uncertainty of the outcome of planning decisions. Private developers are also - it is quite scary, I think - allowing 18 months within their financial appraisals to get a planning permit for something that should be taking about, let us say -- I think the 6 to 8 weeks thing is kind of unrealistic, but 2 to 3 months, one would imagine, a sensible scheme should be getting a permit. It is not happening.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

What happens is it goes on to the end value of the house.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Can I also dare make this comment, that for every good design that is submitted to planning, there is an equally bad design which causes the good designers problems. You have referred there to a particularly vociferous person, say, or a group of people, objecting to a good design. There are also other examples, which probably outnumber the good designs, where people object to what is a bad design and there are still many examples of people in the profession who are submitting designs which leave an awful lot to be desired and cause problems for people who produce good designs. Would you think that is a fair comment?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

That is what we have had too. We have, as an association, now have established -- we do have not a date, but we intend to meet with the Planning Department, particularly the Design Review Group, and have some sort of open post mortem on what we think good design is. Everyone has a different view. One of the thoughts was perhaps we somehow snip the company logos off the drawings and put up schemes which perhaps applicants or architects feel were unfairly treated, or perhaps the planners think were not up to standard, and just have an open discussion on it because there is no point in trying to theorise too much. I think the only way to understand good design is to become immersed in it. If we are not designing things as well as we could I know most architects would want to know that. They would want that feedback.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

There is another situation where there is a large percentage of non-architects submitting applications and that absorbs a lot -- if they are below standard that absorbs a lot of a person's time coercing that to a



position where it is acceptable whereas really it should just be sent back.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Well, yes, moving on to a slightly different subject and put a bit more brightness into the proceedings. Regarding colours of houses and estates and such like; do you think that colour has got a job in that respect, into estates especially, make different houses, and on the other hand should there be possibly, shall we say, a bit more control over it, such as, dare I say, Norman's with the bright yellow and such like? Do you think that is a part of the architectural scheme a bit? On a serious note regarding the estates, do you think that once you have looked at that, is there any advantage in different colours within the properties?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Absolutely. I think it is a really cheap way to make life much more bright and cheerful and it should -- I think on one level there is a sort of possibility of an artistic inspirational colour scheme. On the other level there is the possibility of a really thought out, sensitive kind of vernacular colour scheme with muted colours that would fit fantastically but too often the pot of magnolia comes out at the end of the job and everything gets covered in custard and I think it is a great shame. We see it all the time on our own schemes because quite often, even on our own schemes, the developer says: "Well, we will do it all pale yellow because everyone likes that and no need to ask." It is never talked about and that is a great shame.

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

Just white or magnolia.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

On the other hand I know one does not want to be too bureaucratic and such like, as well, but I just picked out that particular on Norm's of the bright yellow but I know going up St. Peter's Valley as well, there are some horrible looking mauve ones --

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Yes, I see.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

There is that there as well and I did not know if there should be any control. Does it spoil the effect? Would it spoil the design? Do you think there should perhaps be a bit more control over that or ...?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I think it is really hard to relax and control at the same time. Colour has never killed anybody and you

have to go with things a bit, personally.

**Deputy S. Power:**

My own experience, coming from the west of Ireland - and if any of you have been to the west of Ireland, any of the small towns or villages - what they have done is in traditional Irish town streetscape or village streetscape tends to have a multitude of buildings all different colours and the Planning Department, the Irish Planning Ministry has encouraged county councils to encourage new estates to have multiple colours in an estate of 90 or 100 houses. So, you do not have a terrace of blancmange, you have them split up into separate colours and they vary the external appearance sometimes as well, into plaster, brick, something else and that kind of thing and it works.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

We struggled quite a bit with the Berkshire housing scheme and we ended up doing this kind of rainbow from yellow to bright red, through different colours of orange and so on and the inspiration for that was a scheme, I think it was in Holland, where they just employed an artist to come up with the colour scheme, which I think is a great idea because I do not think architects necessarily see themselves as colourists but why not employ a local artist for a few days to simply advise on exact colours. I think they would get a lot from it, maybe even the community and yes, absolutely, it is a very simple way just to lift something out of the ordinary, I think into something potentially extraordinary.

**Deputy. S. Power:**

I think the Berkshire Court is a good example because when it emerged from the paint job there were a lot of people taking a sharp intake of breath but in fact it grew on people very quickly.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

There was a tremendous radio debate about the colour, which I thought was quite surreal.

**Deputy S. Power:**

I think Berkshire Court is a good idea of how you deal with the elevation, the external elevation and break it up with colour; rainbow coalition.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

In terms of material it is often said that the character of the particular location is defined as much by the materials that have been used as part of the architectural building pad for building buildings. To what extent should more modern materials like glass or stone or whatever be used in particular situations within the urban areas? Should it be that you can have timber-framed buildings as long as they are fronted by granite or local materials used in every instance or should there be some automatic kind of allowance to use building materials as they become widely available?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

None of those are modern materials, I do not think, are they?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

No.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

We get on to a theory of design very quickly, I suppose.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

The design influences the materials that you choose and I do not think you could say: "In this particular area there should be any kind of prescriptive design guide saying you should use these 5 materials because they are used a bit further up the street." I think that should be purely left ... that is what we should do. That is our skill, to sell the design and the materials to the Planning Department and making it prescriptive in any way really is the wrong move. It ties our hands.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

There is no question that originality and uniformity fight against each other. So, from one hand we are trying to say: "Let us have things that are original, things that are practical, fresh thinking." The chances are they are going to look quite different and certainly in a small island I think there is a danger of having a sort of Disneyland approach to architecture where every building is dramatically different. The net effect of that is not very harmonious. So, it seems to me there is a need to balance the kind of potentially quite interesting modern design concepts that probably all of us would promote, with a recognition of the materials that surround us; perhaps colour schemes that surround us, so that I am not entirely sure, except some very special buildings, we should necessarily be kind of creating absolutely ultra-modern, totally alien buildings but I think we also have to recognise what is around us. I mean, one of the thoughts I had when we went through these questions was: "We also have to recognise the skill of the designer and the skill of the developer." There is a package that comes with this and there is a budget. There are all sorts of things. We do not do enough really to understand the track record of the people that are submitting the schemes. Chances are if somebody is submitting a scheme that perhaps has not done very good buildings before and it is quite challenging, it is not going to come out very well. So I think there is a sort of need to tailor the approach to the skill and the track record of the person doing the design and building the building. It struck me that also if you do that there are perhaps 2 strands to it; one is a simple approach and one is a complex approach and there may be an argument for kind of pulling that out of the application earlier on, knowing who is behind it, knowing perhaps what they have done before. Are you going to do a simple approach? If you are, perhaps the idea is to possibly more closely follow the surroundings, not necessarily copy them, but follow them more closely

in terms of material, proportion, colour and so on. If you are going to do something more complicated I think the onus is on the architects and the developers to prove that they can do it and I think there is a greater degree of -- and you will soon find that the more commercially-minded people will not want to make that effort. It becomes, it is sad to say, but there becomes a sort of 2-stream approach. I think that is probably the only way we are going to get some sort of consistently better design standards.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

That has probably strayed into Paul's next question, I think.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Can I just ask one supplementary on that? One of the areas on the external treatment of a building and the materials used that I have noticed in the last 6 months in this review, was the treatment of windows. In some developments we saw in the UK and some developments we saw in Vienna last week; we saw a development last week which was 25 years old, double-glazed timber-framed windows. High quality, which have outlasted, obviously, a lot of the white UPVC (Unplasticised Polyvinyl Chloride), stuff that has come into this Island and I think much like the way we treat car parking, there seems to be a mindset about windows. I do not know why we have not broken to bringing in high-quality timber-framed double-glazed windows from wherever they can be built. We have seen them in Beddington and we have seen them in Vienna and they really work extremely well.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

As a matter of course, on a lot of the modern buildings that we do, we use Danish, thermally broken, timber and aluminium, double-glaze, Low-E windows as a matter of course. We put them in. So, again, as Mike said, it is who is behind it, who is driving it? Is it the architect; is it the developer; who are the people behind the development? What is the quality of the building that they are delivering? You can see there is a common thread.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

Can I also say about the quality of materials - we are now looking at materials - as you say, windows which have not lasted the course of time, but is that not a bit of a throw-back to the fact that in States' tenders and things it is always the lowest price that is accepted, or that used to be the case, and now, obviously, paying a price for it because it is not necessarily -- the commitment was not made 20 years ago or however long ago, so now we have to face up to those realities that perhaps it is not accepting the cheapest price. You have got to take a bit more of a different view for long term and quality.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

It is the old adage; you get what you pay for.

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

This question, how should suitability and context of buildings be considered in relation to the streetscape and surrounding community? Perhaps in the ordinary part of the world it would be defined within the words and the context of the sentence but if you take that sentence and that question: "Suitability and context of buildings in relation to the streetscape and surrounding community", how should they be considered, in itself is a question, as I say, in any other place. How does that change when you come to Jersey and you have got different parishes, different communities, different traditions? How difficult is it to work as an architect or to deliver good design, to plan for an estate when you are driven by the parochial considerations like, for example, the recent decision last night at the Parish Hall of St. Clements, to not have the retirement homes in the close proximity to Jambart Lane, for example? Do you think there is an issue there about -- for example in St. Helier it seems that anything will get anywhere, as long as it fits. If it cannot fit then we will make it a little bit smaller whereas in any other parish it is like: "Well, we have got to get it past the parish ratepayers first." Do you think there is inequity there? Do you think that given the different contexts of the Island there are easier places to focus your time and energy in other parishes or do you think it is an easy thing to do to be able to take suitability and context of buildings in a general approach to Jersey?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I think it is a sad reflection that the most ordinary housing units are the ones that are most often ignored. Certainly, you are absolutely right, it is must easier to get innovative ideas off the ground in St. Helier but that is reasonable, I suppose. In any urban context you are going to find more radical ideas emerge and clearly in any of the parishes you are going to get a much more conservative approach. People do not want to see change there, even less than they do in St. Helier, I think. That is understandable. It is probably a fact of life, personally.

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

So, is it something that you commit a lot of time and energy to? You say architects do not normally consider colours as much as they might but do you think that you spend -- I mean, I know a couple of architects that seem to spend a lot of their time trying to get their heads around the political issue before they get their heads around the actual space they are working with.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

We spend a lot of time trying to get our head around developing a modern vernacular building for Jersey; one that is not a flat-roofed kind of totally glazed box but one that respects the kind of general building forms but takes it into perhaps a new direction that could have some environmental sort of overlay to it as well. Trying to find something that will kind of fit Jersey but not sort of be a complete cop-out in terms of just a pastiche with the fake chimneys and the granite wallpaper because, to be perfectly honest, fallback position is always that and we see it everywhere we look. The fallback

position is the fibreglass chimneys and kind of trying to sort of find ye olde Jersey somewhere and I think that is always the last chance saloon when it comes to a housing scheme, I think. It is every expensive to do.

**Deputy S. Power:**

To what extent do you think suitability and context in any development any professional, good designer has been involved in has been totally compromised by - let me take out "totally" - has been compromised by development briefs; habitable rooms per acre.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

It is a difficult one because unless you are involved in it you would not necessarily know all of the -- what the development brief has made you do or made another practice do, so I would find that a very difficult question to answer of anything specific, unless it is a particular case that somebody might want to talk about personally, clearances.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Is it Norman Foster who said: "Society gets the architecture it deserves"? I think if one is going to generate prescriptive development briefs do not be surprised to see prescriptive developments built. If what is at the bottom of your question is perhaps a sort of search for something that is a bit fresher, more innovative, perhaps raises the bar and changes things a bit then, yes, the development brief has to have someone suggest that as a possibility, if not as a central idea. I mean; it is the argument of do we kick off a major housing scheme with a competition, for example? You will always get surprising things from competitions if the brief is set reasonably fluid. Whether or not certain parts of the Island are ready for that sort of development is a very real question. It was very interesting to see -- we were looking at a project for the flats down at Havre des Pas, the high-rise flats, and the original model that looked absolutely fantastic was simply floor plates. It did not have any walls on it. It was a lovely 1960s model but the promise of that was very different to the reality of the flats that were built.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Just leading on from that, it is something that I have thought about in the past and asked the same question, undoubtedly to yourselves possibly, necessarily, but I get a little bit from what you have led on to that there, that I am wondering in a sense who leads who? Whether the architects are restricted by the developers? Whether there is any conflict between the 2? Who drives who? Do the developers drive the architects or the architects drive the developers? I think this is a big problem.

**Mr. P. Waddington:**

The planners drive everything; it is simple. There is some truth in that, in fairness, it is not really a flippant comment. Most of the developers that we have dealt with over the years, yes, they have to

make a profit; they will admit that but they are also very interested in the product and what they are doing. The one luxury they generally never have is time and so very often the process of delivering a design through planning is one of the most critical things and, you know, therefore, I think it is perfectly reasonable that the Planning Minister has sought to raise design standards because most developers, I think it would be fair to say, if they knew they were in a process where they could get an idea of what they were going to achieve at the end of the day, and it could be dealt with fairly swiftly, I am sure they would be happy to improve the product they are doing.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

It is just my concern and ways that obviously -- but from private developers they have their own self-employed architects and from my point of view I think that is pretty restrictive in a sense because therefore they work in cohesion with each other and it does not really give an opportunity for other thoughts and that to come into the process, and I am just wondering whether there could be a way through that you could get other input. I know it is driven by the individual architect but it is a problem that restricts a lot of the innovative ideas because they are then employed by developers who want to get their pound-and-a-half of flesh.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

They are churning out the same stuff each time because it is easier than doing something new. The only way that can be controlled is by a very strong Planning Department. If the design is not perceived to be good enough, it simply does not go any further. Eventually those developers will get the message that they are not getting anywhere and something has to change.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

I think that message is coming through now. We are in a fortunate position where our practice produces contemporary, slightly off-the-wall houses and our developers are happy to be taken down that path and build the houses for sale in areas where it is acceptable. In rural locations the Planning Department are quite prescriptive about what they want to see on the rural fringe, so therefore it is more of a traditional form that you go for. They are receptive.

**Deputy S. Power:**

My next question is related to carbon footprints and carbon neutral footprints. To what extent have any of you been involved in -- you mentioned geothermal trenching already but improved insulation? We have seen developments in the UK where the insulation was 300 millimetres - the actual outer course to the inner course was over 2 feet, - under a metre. Photovoltaic cells, wind energy: have any of you tackled any of these yet or have you got any comments to make as to whether we become more carbon neutral and more environmentally friendly?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I think we should. We have got a scheme at the moment; it is going to have geothermal heating for one house. We have done some reasonably limited office schemes with energy recovery and so on, one in Guernsey and one in Jersey, up at the JEC (Jersey Electricity Company). We have thought about it for years. It seems in the last fortnight almost the rest of the world has woken up and politicians are interested; Marks & Spencer are interested in the UK, everybody is talking about it. I think there is a reality check in what can and cannot be delivered, so anything geothermal and solar hot water heating are there. Good insulation, good air tightness are simple, easy things to do. I think wind energy and PV (photovoltaic) electricity, solar electricity are more questionable and they would need some research but what does not seem to surround the discussion, apart from perhaps some carbon taxing for bigger businesses, is the whole issue of the tax infrastructure to allow this to happen. Ten years ago we did a scheme for electric cars and putting solar panels on the car parks in St. Helier. To encourage people to use electric cars they would get a free car parking space and they could plug in and charge up during the day. It got nowhere. I think that is the sort of thinking we need. Gordon Brown has just removed stamp duty from carbon zero homes. We should be doing the same thing. We should be encouraging perhaps geothermal schemes on fringe sites like the redundant glasshouses site. I think there has to be some accommodation within, I suppose, our fiscal structure to allow these things to happen. No developer is going to put a solar panel on the roof if it costs another £10,000, out of the goodness of their heart and in fact at ECO-ACTIVE one gun in the audience said: "A lot of young families ..." -- this possibly comes back to Homes for Lives, they are buying their first house or flat or whatever, they may be selling it in 4 years' time. Why would they spend money on something that might take 10 years to pay back?

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

That is what one of the politicians said that was key in that meeting that I was sitting next to - I will not say who it was - the admittance was: "Well, solar power is lovely but am I really going to be around in 30 years to pick up the dividend. I will probably be dead by then." That is the thing, is it not? Is cost the driving factor then in all of this?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

I do not think so, because there is a lot of conscience in it, too. A lot of people want to do these things. A lot of people do not understand them and there is certainly a great deal of spin.

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

There could be grants or something or government grants.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

There should be; I think there should be some form of encouragement. I am not an accountant. I would not know how to do that but whether it is planning gain, whether it is some sort of rebate or grant, I do



not know. There has to be a way of -- otherwise I think we are in danger of becoming a kind of political aspiration and a non-reality to the rest of the Island and I think that would be a great shame.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Can I bring in the Constable here because the next 2 questions are probably fairly closely tied in to what we are discussing here?

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Well, they slot in and you have already just finished about solar panels, so that is one -- in fact I was thinking when you mentioned there, when you were talking about space and such like and people wanting and putting in some greenhouses into part of their houses, I do not know whether it is possible to have all greenhouses as solar panels and you would have a dual effect, in that sense. That just came off the top of my head. Primarily it is to do with the noise and temperature insulation because at the moment it seems there are buildings which are getting put up but it is -- the requirements seem to be at a bare minimum and everything always seems to be whether - I am sure not just yourselves but other developers again - as long as the minimum requirements are there, everybody seems to be happy and really the question is, do you think there should be an improved noise and temperature one, because there are complaints of the ones that have just been recently built? They are not sufficient but they are within the minimum requirements and this is -- those 2 words seem to be coming up very, very frequently, about “minimum requirements” and do you think that you yourselves should raise that standard or the set standard should be raised in any case?

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

We tend to -- with private houses we tend to put more insulation to reduce heating costs as a matter of course and the clients are very supportive. Obviously they are funding it. The standard should be raised. In Scandinavia the requirements are far higher. The minimum requirements are far higher than the standards that we have here.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

But then if I could interrupt, obviously in Scandinavia they would be higher because they know they are going to get a vast difference in temperatures, especially in the winters. So, therefore, they have to prepare for that fact where it is not necessarily a preparation required here, shall we say. Those standards would be because we are only likely to get snow once every 20 years but in Scandinavia they would do. So, from the temperature side of things I can understand that as well, but also the noise one is one of the main factors I think.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

You are talking with apartment schemes particularly or ...?

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Yes.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Yes, I think it is an issue. In fairness the last 5, maybe 10 years, the standard of construction and the requirements under building control have just got hugely better but noise is a very strange thing where, you know what it is like, the quieter the night the slightest noise can upset some people more than others. It is a very emotive area. I do not know technically whether we have got to the end of the line with that really. I think the standards are pretty good for noise, generally.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

But noise is -- it is the standard of construction as well. Transmission of sound is like water. If there is a hole, it will find its way through it. So, it is the standard of construction that is paramount.

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

It is also where you place appliances and things. If you place your washing machine next to a cavity wall or something like that, it is probably not as good as putting it in your basement.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

It is all those things but it is also frequencies and if the frequency of the noise generated is a similar frequency to a wall construction, the noise will just go straight through. It is not just somebody there banging on the wall. The actual construction and the thickness and the mass and all those kinds of things; it is a little bit more complicated than just saying: "Let us make the walls thicker and make them more mass" because that does not reduce the noise down pro rata.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Just coming back to the insulation, would you consider now that really we should raise the standard up of insulation over here, so that it does incorporate that?

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

Super-insulating buildings will reduce their heating costs; less materials being burnt to produce electricity to heat buildings.

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

But so would putting a jumper on.

**Deputy P. van Bodegom:**

It is going to be cheaper in the long run.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Could I ask the Constable to move to the last question on our sheets that we have, seeing as it is closely allied to what we are discussing? The final one, and then we will do Sean's to finish off.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

To what extent is the level of the environmental technology going to be included in the new homes in the future? Have we got a way forward for that? Have you got thoughts and what has been the liaison between yourselves and planning and such like with that in mind?

**Mr. C. Buesnel:**

From our practice perspective, we are finding that individual clients especially are becoming a lot more educated and when they come in to give us a briefing they are much more into solar panels, rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and, as Mike has already touched on here, the ground source heat pumps. So, it is being client-led on an individual house basis and things are moving in that kind of direction. Planning Department need to get up to speed on all those things. I am just reminded, at the moment everybody is, you know: "Okay, I will be eco-active" and that is lovely but only 6 months ago I was having a discussion with a planning officer who felt that the solar panels we were proposing were too shiny. You are trying to push these things forward and you have got like-minded clients, then you come across at the Planning Department. It just does not work.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Is there a difference though or -- I would think there is a difference, shall we say, between the individual private one and most probably the developers with estates and such like. That has to come into the cost again once more, one would have thought, does it not? Would that be able to come into it under the same umbrella and to push them forward as well, on estates and larger things rather than just the individually led one? You know, there is at times a question of people requirements but the other times there is a question of leading people.

**Mr. W. Waddington:**

If I may say so, it comes down to the States. Do the States want to see and lead Jersey into a sort of eco-era or not? I think you have got to lead by example and certainly you cannot have a situation where States' housing is being built to a dime and then expect the private developers to somehow shine their sort of eco warrior stance as well. I think there has got to be some sort of States leadership. There have got to be some tax breaks. There has got to be some educated comparison between what is out there technologically. Some of it just simply does not work. I mean wind generation on a domestic scale does not work. It causes problems with noise. There are all sorts of issues. It sounds good. B&Q are

selling them for whatever but there are some real issues and I think one would want to know exactly what the payback period was? What the real environmental benefit was with some of those things? I would also say that there is no better group of people to assist in trying to pull that information together and become part of the conversation than I think the AJA (Association of Jersey Architects), the local architect. You will find a lot of us have kind of got fed up with some environmental things simply because there never seems to be infrastructure of interest surrounding putting them in and we have always been interested in doing that, and we have tried on occasion, but we have got an opportunity now, I think, politically. It seems the interest has increased and we should use that. I know that our members would be happy to contribute to that, as we did do with ECO-ACTIVE, about condensation.

**Mr. P. van Bodegom:**

Mike has mentioned when technology -- solar panels, you have them on the house yourself. I do not know how he got planning permission for it. Joking aside we are putting background ventilation systems in houses with heat recovery. Taking the warm air, passing it through a heat recovery system, exhausting it, cooler, sending the warm air back into the building; again reducing the requirement to heat the building.

**Mr. M Waddington:**

People use bathroom vents that throw out the steamy air but they recover the heat from it, so that you do not -- it is like opening a window and throwing out all your heat. There are plenty of simple things that can be used.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Right. Sean, 2 questions there.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Last 2 you will be pleased to know. We referred earlier to how we would increase living space with any unit of accommodation. How do you feel that -- what improvements we can make here if we were to be less prescriptive and more innovative, to increase living space within the footprints allocated to individual units? The second bit is, would it be appropriate enough to encourage loft-style conversions?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Is that the answer? Yes, I absolutely agree. You need to look at the companies in the UK like Manhattan Loft that are having to go into areas of cities where perhaps land is cheaper and turn a product round for demand and they are doing exactly that. There are plenty of areas, certainly around St. Helier, where one could imagine a sort of imaginative loft-style living happening.

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

Can I ask a question about this? It is all very well having these spaces but there are many instances where the States have a huge property portfolio of their own and they have, perhaps, potential to open those spaces up and expand into the lofts and spaces above their garages or they could have lofts from a lean-to space, et cetera, but we are too prescriptive in allowing people to take in lodgers or take in -- in that area we have got a huge stock of housing. Whereby in the private sector we say: "You can have 4 or 5 people to a bathroom and you do not need a licence if you have got less than a dozen or something", with the housing regulations, but within the States' sector of the housing market, which is colossal, if you are in States' property you must abide by these rules. You must not have any lodgers. You must not live in this space. You must do this or your rent will be affected. Do you think that is probably causing us to build unnecessarily or not to utilise the space that we have got already? Or no views?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

It must be having an effect, I guess, yes, certainly.

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

You must be designing homes in the public sector and the private sector as a group of architects. How do we utilise those spaces in the best way is something that I think needs to be driven into policy and if the policy of the States under housing is like your -- under this property you shall abide by these rules, is that too prescriptive or do you think we would be able to get a lot more out of our Island as a very small defined space if we were to relax some of these restrictions? It can be shared equity, which is a great step forward for the purchaser of a house but do you not think there should be shared use of responsibility in respect of properties that people --

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

I think if I can help you out. What Paul appears to be saying is that do you think there are differences in the way housing spaces are used by those who rent and those who own?

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

Yes, of course. There always will be, will there not?

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

There are loft spaces above shops and things that we could be designing and architects could be, you know, making innovative, artistic creations from that would give you the inspirations that are not being used because we have got this overall, stuck-in-the-mud 1940s theory as to what we will prescribe in regulations.

**Mr. M. Waddington:**

That is right. There are some complexities with St. Helier. We see it with even larger office schemes

where the division of ownership is so great within these buildings that the idea of sort of a group of buildings kind of joining together and doing something in a common way is terribly hard to activate, yet could be very good. I think one of the hurdles is trying to get an understanding of the ownerships and pulling those people together, some of who are always rather suspicious of the neighbouring properties that are trying to do a joined-up development. The other thing that struck me when you said that was; there is a sort of growing obsession that somehow what is called “garden grabbing” is a bad thing. “Garden grabbing”, where you have a few properties that have very large gardens and they may well be in the built-up area but possibly a rural built-up area defined in the Island Plan, and it is possible to slot in 2 or 3 houses as a communal development. A lot of people are seeing that as a terrible thing. Now, I understand that people who live in the parishes perhaps they guard their sort of green space more closely than the people who live in St. Helier but it is fundamental to the Island plan that there is some sort of alignment on whether that is a good thing or a bad thing. The Island Plan says it is a good thing, because it is built-up area and it prevents us building in green zone. The reality of permissions that have been granted or not granted at the moment seems to fly in the face of that. I think there is an issue there that at least needs airing and discussing and sorting out.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Well, that is all the questions we had on those. We could probably go on for hours and hours but we are not going to. I would like to thank you on behalf of the panel for your forthright answers. They are most enlightening and once we have gone over those we may well invite you back. I do not know. We will obviously think about it. So, on behalf of the panel I would like to thank you for attending and we close the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**