

2016.05.24

3.5 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier of the Minister for the Environment regarding the application of opaque film to the glazed west elevation windows of the new Police Headquarters:

Can the Minister bring forward the date by which opaque film must be applied to the glazed west elevation windows of the new Police Headquarters or alternatively press for a satisfactory temporary measure so that neighbouring residents do not have to wait until the building is occupied in January 2017 for it to meet planning requirements and for neighbouring residents to have their privacy protected?

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin (The Minister for Environment):

The obscure glazing to the west elevation of the new Police Headquarters is controlled by condition No. 27 of Planning Permission P/1005/2012 which reads as follows: "All windows on the west elevation of the Police Headquarters building hereby approved shall be permanently formed as a fixed light and glazed with obscure glass and shall thereafter be retained. No further windows or other openings shall be formed in that elevation unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Minister for Planning and Environment prior to first installation." Although the conditions do not require a specific timing for the obscuring of the glass the department requires that this take place prior to the occupation of the building in order for the purpose of the condition to have its desired effect. The architects appointed to oversee the development have confirmed in writing that this will take place. Additionally, the contractors carrying out the development have advised me that this task is planned for Monday, 30th May, next Monday. I know that that is a Bank Holiday and I am not sure if that is an accurate job of work for that day or whether that is a mistake but I am sure the Deputy will be assured by the date. Finally, while the Chief Officer or Planning Committee does have the power under Article 27 of the Planning and Building Law to formally modify a planning permission it has not sought to do so in the light of the applicant's undertaking to co-operate via its architect's letter and contractor's statement.

3.5.1 Deputy R. Labey:

If the planning condition required the opaqueness to be permanently formed in the windows, this film applied to the windows would suggest that that is not a permanent form. I want to know why the opaque quality and feature of these windows - bombproof, bulletproof windows - was not delivered as part of the manufacture of these windows and why this extra film has to be applied. Is it an afterthought? Can the Minister shed any more light on this?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am not exactly sure but it is my understanding the glass in the police station is a particular specific type of glass. It has to do and fulfil a whole number of tasks and meet standards and that, I understand, it is not easy for this glass to be opaque and meet these standards at the same time, which is why it is going to be covered with a film of whatever material is required to meet the condition and could not be put in at the time. I will find out for the Deputy but certainly one of the reasons is because of the glass being very specific.

Deputy R. Labey:

I thank the Minister and apologies to Members for the ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Final supplementary.

3.5.2 Deputy R. Labey:

Yes, indeed. Apologies to Members for the parochial nature of this question, but for the people living in those apartments between State Street and the new Police Headquarters, those windows are very close and now staring directly into their living quarters, into their bedrooms. I am just worried that this was an oversight because research shows that other makers of bombproof glass can make it opaque in the procedure and I would ask the Minister to investigate further on this.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Sorry, was that a question?

Deputy R. Labey:

Yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Sorry, what was the question?

Deputy R. Labey:

Somewhere there. Would he agree with me that further investigation into this ... because it is a planning requirement. It is in the law and just because it is a States building ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, you have made a number of statements. If you could now put your final supplementary question.

Deputy R. Labey:

Did the Minister hear a question in there? Does he think this merits further investigation?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am happy to agree with the Deputy that I will go away and come back with a further answer for him but I would also point out that if his residents are very keen to resolve issues quickly that he could use a telephone or an email and I could respond almost immediately to this rather than have to wait for today.