



PRESS RELEASE

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Opposition Still Has a Lot to Learn on Development Issues

It is clear that the Opposition still has a lot to learn following their latest comments on development issues. One of the first lessons is that this Government is not going to take the blame for the GSD's failures and is not going to let them get away with pretending that what happened before 2011 had nothing to do with them.

It is quite incredible that they should have the audacity to complain about paying attention to petitions when they were the ones who proceeded with the demolition of the Rosia Tanks in the face of considerable public opposition. People in glass houses should not throw stones. This Government, in contrast, has listened to and acted on public concerns on numerous occasions and this has led to changes to both public and private sector projects.

The reason for this is because the Development and Planning Commission (DPC) now meets in public and in front of the press. This allows for greater scrutiny. When Mr Hammond's party were in office they met behind closed doors and its agenda and minutes were treated as a state secret. There is now more discussion and debate on planning applications because of this important change.

The DPC is not the Government. It discusses and determines planning applications independently of the Government to the extent that the two Ministers who sit on it, Dr Garcia and Dr Cortes, often vote differently on planning applications! The process now is more transparent and independent than it has ever been.

The announcement that a new Development Plan is being prepared is not a new. This has been said publicly before. What is clear is that Mr Hammond does not even appear to know that the GSD's own plan which was published in 2009 actually came eight years late.

It is also worth reminding the Opposition that the ones who sold the Mid Town site in an unseemly haste and without a tender process were no other than the GSD when they were in office!