



PRESS RELEASE

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Opposition Are Simply Criticising Their Own Actions on Development Issues

The latest comments made by the Opposition on development and planning matters are further evidence that they simply do not understand the full implications of their own statements. It is obvious that all they have done is jump on the bandwagon of every conceivable on-line petition that is doing the rounds because they have no ideas of their own.

It should be pointed out, in the first place, that the 2009 Development Plan reflects the policy of the GSD when they were in office. The plan is not set in stone and serves as guidance for the Development and Planning Commission, indeed, instructions have already been issued for a new plan to be produced.

In any case, the Risso Bakery demolition had nothing whatsoever to do with the development plan. The root cause of the demolition lay in the inability of the party in Opposition to save the building from decay and deterioration during the sixteen years that they were in office. The state of the building was the reason why demolition was independently authorised. Moreover, in spite of the development plan, it was the GSD that located a multi-storey car park next to the Bakery which dwarfed the surrounding buildings and set a precedent for future development in the area. The Opposition can only point the finger at themselves.

The same thing happened with Police Barracks, which was Government-owned, and where remedial action could have been taken much sooner. Instead it fell on this Government to decant the remaining tenants in Police Barracks and to set in train its restoration. The majority of the complex has been saved, will be refurbished and will provide homes for many people. The only areas that were demolished were those that were deemed to be dangerous and beyond economical repair. The public will gain from the demolition of this area because the area will be used for an open square plus a pedestrian walkway where no such walkway presently exists in a very narrow street. The close proximity of two new schools make it essential that such a walkway can be provided.

The proposed car park at Hargraves, which still requires planning permission, is nowhere near in size, height, scale or massing to the one authorised by the GSD in Engineer Lane. In fact, the proposal is for a couple of storeys with the provision of upgraded sporting facilities on top. Both parking and enhanced sporting facilities are in the public interest.



It beggars belief that the Opposition should complain about developments in Eurocity, King's Wharf, West One and Mid Town when all these sites were granted planning permission, in one form or another, by the GSD themselves!

Indeed, the height, scale and massing of all these projects was such that, on coming into office, the GSLP/Liberal Government spent a considerable amount of time negotiating with developers to reduce the height of the structures even though this had been previously agreed. This led to a reduction in height of Mid Town and the provision of a public area and car park. It also led to a similar reduction in the height of the next phases of King's Wharf and the provision of a public promenade in front. The area of West One and Eurocity has also been improved from what was originally proposed.

The sale of former MOD land for development is nothing new. The GSD themselves sold the Naval Grounds (where Mid Town is located) without going out to tender. They also put out Rosia Bay for sale. Indeed, the very concept of selling ex-MOD assets underpins the Lands Agreement that they entered into in July 2011.

It is obvious that the Opposition do not to have the faintest notion that the consequences of their own negative actions in Government are still being felt to this day. Today's Opposition seem blissfully unaware that in pursuing these lines of argument they are simply criticising their GSD predecessors!