

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT  
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2006**

**Question**

The Minister has recently announced interim policies to improve design, local relevance and space around new buildings; would he explain whether these new policies will be compromised by advice given by the Department or 'in principle' permissions granted by the former Committee and, if so how, and would he also explain what policies, if any, have been put in place so that the Planning Applications Panel is not bound by advice given to applicants by Departmental officers?

**Answer**

Since my appointment as Minister I have introduced interim policies with the following aims –

raising standards in the design of new buildings in Jersey;

encouraging high standard traditionally designed schemes, modern interpretations of traditional theme schemes and modern architectural schemes;

ensuring that new buildings in most cases are designed having regard to their context. They should be appropriate to their surroundings, from which they should draw reference in terms of building form, mass, height;

ensuring that most new buildings should reflect in their design their relevance to Jersey;

ensuring that new residential developments are reasonably spacious;

requiring the provision of models for larger application.

These policies will be further refined in the coming months and will be subject to consultation. Whilst the principles will be applied to new applications, it would be unreasonable to apply these too stringently to applications lodged before the introduction of the interim policies.

The department, wherever possible, will encourage current applications to comply with the new policies but there will inevitably be a transition phase during which compromises will be unavoidable. The department's ability to impose the new design policies will be compromised in cases where specific officer advice has been given based on the policies that previously existed before the introduction of the new guidelines. Furthermore, there will also be cases where previous Committees have given consents in principle or indications and it will be wholly unreasonable to impose the new design principles.

The department and I remain conscious that the panel's discretion should never be compromised by commitments or specific indications given by officers. Therefore, on 16th January 2006, the Director of Planning re-issued written instructions to officers reminding them that any advice given, whether orally or in writing, is without prejudice to any decision the Minister or the Panel might make on a subsequent application, after proper consideration of all the facts.