

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TREASURY AND RESOURCES
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2009

Question

What actions, if any, will the Minister be taking to resolve the long standing maintenance issues at St. James' Centre?

Answer

The funding required to repair the decorative features of the front towers and associated pinnacles of the former 1829 church was estimated at £270,000 in November 2006. Whilst these elements of the building were considered to pose the greatest risk of unstable masonry, there are other areas of decorative tracery work on the towers which should be repaired in conjunction with the pinnacles. The total cost of this has not yet been estimated, but could be double the 2006 figure.

This level of funding cannot be found from Property Holdings' maintenance budget, or from the operators of the Centre, the Jersey Arts Centre Association and the Jersey Arts Trust, which receive annual operating grants from the Education, Sport and Culture Department.

Unfortunately, Property Holdings cannot defer maintenance on other properties within its portfolio in order to redirect funding to St James, as the majority of its maintenance budget is given over to essential statutory compliance work. Furthermore, Property Holdings receives no income from St James to put towards maintenance, and it has not been possible to agree terms for a lease between the States and the occupiers.

Property Holdings has applied to the Planning Department on two occasions for consent to deal with the defective pinnacles using lower cost alternatives to complete repair. The first application was to record and take down the pinnacles, estimated to cost £88,000 in November 2006. The second application was to encase the pinnacles. Both applications were rejected as the proposals were considered inappropriate for this Registered Building, which was then a proposed Site of Special Interest. It should be noted that the property has recently been formally designated as a Site of Special Interest.

Property Holdings has also considered the disposal of St James, but will only pursue this within the context of an approved property strategy for arts, culture and heritage related property. The possibility of increasing the range of uses that St James is put to has also been considered as a means of generating income.

For 2009, it is envisaged that the scaffold will remain in-situ at the front of St James for safety reasons.