

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
BY SENATOR S.C. FERGUSON  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th JANUARY 2017**

**Question**

Will the Minister explain:

- (a) the rationale for the application of heritage policies to residential properties;
- (b) the method by which the Department designates which era is appropriate for a particular property; and
- (c) how the Department deals with any dichotomy arising from heritage policies pursued by the Department and States' policies to conserve energy in residential housing?

**Answer**

- a) The rationale for the application of planning polices to heritage assets is set out in the Revised 2011 Island Plan (pp.103-117, Section 3: Historic Environment), which was approved and adopted by the States in July 2014.

In essence, the historic environment of the Island is a finite resource comprising a range of irreplaceable assets ranging from various roadsides features, such as lavoirs, abreuvoirs and road markers; to castles, churches and towers; and also including houses of various styles such as town houses, cottages and farm groups.

All of these physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of Island identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes, through formal education and in many other ways, to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our Island. The historic environment is also of immense importance for leisure, tourism and the economy. This is also reflected in the outcomes of Island community surveys<sup>1</sup> where the protection of our heritage is consistently one of the high proprieties.

In light of the above, and in accord with generally accepted best practice, policies for the protection and management of change to heritage assets are applied consistently across all types of heritage asset.

It is relevant to note that there are estimated to be around 45,000 households in Jersey of which about 7 % (c 3,000) are listed homes

- b) In general, the older a building the more likely it will have been subject to change as a consequence of which historic buildings tend to have changed and evolved over time. This is set

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<sup>1</sup> See: Survey on Heritage in Jersey (July 2009) <https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/R%20SurveyOnHeritageInJersey%2020090708%20SU.pdf>; and 'My Jersey' (November 2016) Report on the findings of the public consultation on a future vision for Jersey <https://www.gov.je/news/2016/pages/longtermvisionsurveyresults.aspx>

out in the Listing Schedule for each property, giving the likely earliest age of construction, the major phases of change and an assessment of the value of the resulting built form.

In considering further changes to an historic building it is important to properly assess and to understand the significance and value of the existing heritage asset and its constituent features in order to make informed decisions about its future management.

Each case for change to an historic building is thus assessed on its merits having regard to the justification for any such change relative to the context and character of the building and its constituent parts.

- c) As stated above, the planning policies applied by the Department of the Environment to the management of change to heritage assets are set out in the Island Plan, which was approved by the States. Similarly, the States has approved Building Byelaws to improve energy conservation in new buildings as well as in existing buildings where they are subject to change.

In many cases cost-effective and sustainable improvements to the energy efficiency of historic homes can be achieved without damage to their character: specific provision is made in the building byelaws for this to happen.

Heat loss typically occurs in various parts of a building. It is important to take an overall view of energy efficiency measures. It is clear that, even with a notable number of constraints, there are many measures that can be used to improve the energy efficiency of Jersey's listed buildings and the Department of the Environment has published research to identify and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of a range of suitable and feasible measures (see: Historic Buildings Energy Study (2013)

<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/R%20Historic%20Buildings%20Energy%20Study%20Jersey%20Report%20July%202013.pdf>).

Officers of the Historic Environment and Building Control Teams will seek to work with owners of listed buildings to find pragmatic solutions to the challenge of improving the energy efficiency of the relatively limited number of historic homes in the Island. Practically the most challenging changes to houses is their subdivision to flats, or the reconfiguration of lodging houses to flats. There are many different approaches to dealing with both energy efficiency, fire safety and noise compartmentalisation – all of which allow the balance between retaining heritage features and meeting modern standards.