



PRESS RELEASE

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GSD allowed heritage buildings to rot when in office

It is quite extraordinary for the Opposition to argue that their record in Government is somehow irrelevant to whatever they may say or do at present. Their latest response on heritage issues is a case in point.

The truth is that the Opposition cannot possibly expect not to be held for account for what they did or failed to do during their sixteen years in office. It is perfectly legitimate to question why the Opposition did not do in office the things that they are saying now. The idea of zoning of buildings and enforcement of the Development Plan is something that the GSD should have done when they had the chance. Instead they now pontificate from the sidelines about these issues when they did nothing about it at the time.

This is central to the debate for more than one reason. It is essential to understand the Police Barracks and Town Range buildings were around during those sixteen years and that one was Government-owned for some time and the other for all the duration. It was the perfect opportunity for the GSD to have saved these buildings in their entirety from 1996 until 2011. Instead they chose not to do so. The Risso bakery, although privately owned, could also have been tackled earlier through other enforcement mechanisms. This was also not done.

The problem, as everyone knows, is that the buildings in question continued to be exposed to the elements year after year and have corroded to a degree where experts claimed that they were unsafe and could no longer be viably preserved in their entirety. Nonetheless, the bulk of the facades in Police Barracks and Town Range will both be saved. It was too late to save the Risso Bakery.

The responsibility for this lies squarely on the shoulders of the previous administration that allowed these buildings to rot for sixteen years. In this context it is not surprising that the Opposition clearly want to distance themselves from their dismal record in Government.

The criticism of the way the new DPC works is not worthy of an answer because this is now light years ahead from the closed and secretive meetings that took place under the previous administration. The Commission works extremely well thanks to the laudable efforts of the Town Planning Department and it includes representation across a number of fields. The GSD is entitled to disagree with three recent decisions but what they are not entitled to do is use those three disagreements to tarnish the professional reputation and the hard work of its members who have considered hundreds of applications in public.



The bottom line is that the people who destroyed the Rosia Tanks and the Theatre Royal and under whose watch Cliff Top House was built, have no moral right to to preach about heritage to anyone.