



PRESS RELEASE

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Opposition Has a Poor Record On Planning

The Government is very sorry that Trevor Hammond has issues with Development and Planning in Gibraltar. This is quite remarkable because the Opposition is not blameless in the picture that they are now trying to paint. Indeed, they seem to have forgotten that some of the buildings going up now date back to permits, consents or agreement that the GSD themselves entered into when they were in Government.

The Opposition does not like it when we remind them of this inconvenient truth.

It was the GSD that disposed of the land which is today the site of both the Mid-Town and the King's Wharf Projects. They came to agreements with developers who sought and obtained planning permission accordingly. In those days, Mr Hammond would do well to remember, the Development and Planning Commission met in secret, they did not publish their agenda or their minutes and objectors did not have the right to appear in public before them.

This Government was able to negotiate with the developers of Mid-Town and King's Wharf in order to lower the height of both these projects, to take part of the plot in order provide an open area to the north of the leisure centre and to ensure public access through a promenade which will run adjacent to the sea. Mr Hammond is free to like or dislike the structures that are going up, but he should bear in mind that what his Government had actually contemplated and agreed would have been much worse from his own perspective.

Moreover, these structures outside the City Walls were in line with the GSD Government's own Development Plan!

It is perfectly true that building and development causes an inconvenience to people. However, some of this is necessary in order to further the wider social and economic development of Gibraltar. Development is of direct benefit to the economy, produces revenue and allows the Government to invest in order pursue projects like affordable homes, schools and sporting facilities. The new schools at the old St Bernard's site, the new University, the new small boats marina, the new houses at Mons Calpe Mews, the new houses at Beachview Terraces and the flats for the elderly at Charles Bruzon House would not have been built if one follows Mr Hammond's philosophy.



Indeed, instead of making vague and general statements, the Opposition should state precisely what developments they are against. Would they have built new schools? Would they have built hundreds of affordable new homes?

Mr Hammond also complains about the proposed new location for GBC. He appears not to know that the structure in question already went to the Development and Planning Commission and obtained planning permission as a private office development. The latest announcement simply involves the rental of office space in that complex. The proposed changes are internal into a studio for GBC.

It is clear that in seeking to be all things to all men, the Opposition have forgotten that they are responsible for some of what they are complaining about today.