

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 64/2007

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The Opposition has received representations from concerned citizens regarding the level of encroachment into the public highway of a new development constructed at the corner of King's Street and Line Wall Road. The situation there confirms the general perception that exists that Gibraltar has become a free for all for developers to do what they like.

The development in question was originally for two executive suites on the sixth floor of a sixth storey office building with parking on part of the ground floor. The problem is that where the block meets King's Street, there has been an obvious encroachment into the public highway because both the gutter and drain along the side of the road are now partly under the building!

The plans for the construction of this office block, which were submitted to the Development and Planning Commission show that the width of King's Street would be nearly 3 metres at the narrowest point. Instead the width of the road, which has been physically measured by the Opposition, is only 2.2 metres at the narrowest point.

This may represent a serious problem for emergency service vehicles which may need to cut across King Street in order to get somewhere urgently.

The development at Giro's Passage received a Development Aid licence on 1 July 2003 which gave the developers 60% in development aid. This was originally on the condition that the development was completed by 31 December 2005. If it was not ready by the end of 2005, then the aid would be cut to 40%. However, in 2004 there was an amendment made to the original application and it appears that this condition was removed. When the licence was extended allowing for completion until the end of this month it was extended with the original 60% development aid.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister for Trade and Industry with responsibility for planning Dr Joseph Garcia explained:

"The Opposition consider that it is totally unacceptable that any developer should encroach into the public highway in this manner. Independently of this, the level of development aid which has been given to this particular development is unusually high.

All this reinforces our view that the Government is allowing developments to go up in a manner which does not appear to be maximising the public benefit that could be obtained. The main concern seems to be the profit of the developers as opposed to the benefit to the general public of Gibraltar," said Dr Garcia.

ENDS

Enclosed



Four photographs showing the way in which King Street has narrowed with the drain and gutter partly under the building