

Planning and Environment Department
Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance

Planning Policy Note 4

May 2008

Roofscape

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About Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary planning guidance builds upon the provisions of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002 and the policies in the Island Plan 2002 and provides more detailed advice on the way in which the provisions of the law and Island Plan policies are likely to be interpreted and applied. Between formal reviews of the Island Plan, the Minister may also use supplementary planning guidance to issue interim planning policy in response to development trends and issues. It can also provide clarification about how the planning system operates, including advice about how to make applications for various things like planning permission and historic building grants.

The current supplementary planning guidance is listed and can be viewed on the States of Jersey website www.gov.je/PlanningBuilding/Pages/default.aspx. Documents which pre-date electronic production will be added to the website for viewing or downloading following review, as appropriate. Hard copies of all supplementary planning guidance can be obtained from Planning and Building Services, Planning and Environment Department, South Hill, St Helier, JE2 4US. Telephone: 01534 445508 email: planning@gov.je

ROOFSCAPE

Context

The treatment of the roof shape and finish of the top of a building is an important factor in determining how it will contribute to the character and townscape of an area.

Architectural details, such as the treatment of the eaves line, roof planes and the roofline silhouette, are all important aspects of a building's design. In St Helier - where there are a large number of important public vantage points providing views across the topographical 'bowl' in which the town sits as well as long public views into the town along main transport corridors and from around St Aubin's Bay - the contribution of these elements to the town's roofscape and skyline is highly significant.

The scale of buildings affects the scale of streets and spaces and is also a strong determinant of urban character. Even in St. Helier, the scale of building is of a markedly human scale, generally ranging from 2.5 to 3.5 storeys in height, interspersed with discrete clusters of buildings up to 6 storeys, with the occasional high rise building. The treatment and finish of a building's roofline, therefore, affects its scale and massing and its relationship to the public realm, and can alter the scale and character of the Island's urban areas.

Policy framework

Given the significance of the treatment of the roofs of buildings for the urban character and roofspace of the Island's built-up areas, and particularly the town of St. Helier, the Minister for Planning and Environment is becoming increasingly concerned by the apparent desire to accommodate building plant and associated equipment on the top of new and existing buildings.

The siting of what can be a significant amount of wholly functional and visually unsightly plant and equipment in a manner suggestive of an after-thought, rather than an integral element of the original design of the building, not only has the potential to be visually damaging to the appearance and design of the development and the character of the area, but can also add a significant amount of height and mass to a structure. In addition, the rooftop installation of plant and equipment may also lead to problems related to nuisance for neighbouring uses and occupants, as a result of emissions of various forms.

The Minister wishes to avoid the proliferation of rooftop accretions, in the form of building plant, equipment and other structures, and would encourage building owners, occupiers, developers and architects to explore more environmentally passive solutions to the management and operation of buildings, or to incorporate plant or equipment essential to the operation of a building and/or its intended use or occupants within the original design concept and fabric of any new or refurbished building.

Proposals for new rooftop plant, equipment or other structures will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that there is overriding justification for its provision and where it can be provided in a position and form that does not cause unreasonable harm, relative to a number of key tests.

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The siting of roof plant, equipment or other structures on the roofs of new or existing buildings, where it projects above the roofline will not normally be permitted.

Where roof plant enclosures already exist, there will be a presumption against the placing of new roof plant, equipment or other structures which extend outside or which would serve to enlarge the existing roof plant enclosure.

In exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that plant, equipment or other structures essential to the use of the building cannot be located within the existing building envelope, such development may only be permissible where it is located in a position that:

- (i) will not unreasonably affect the character and amenity of the area;
- (ii) will not have an unreasonable impact on neighbouring uses and the local environment by reason of visual intrusion or other amenity considerations;
- (iii) will not have an unreasonable impact on public health, safety and the environment, by virtue of noise, dust, light, odour, fumes, electro-magnetic fields or any other form of emission; and
- (iv) will not have an impact on the safe operations of the airport.

Design guidance for town roofscape

Pitched roofs, flat roofs and mansards are all common in St. Helier and there is no general roof type. In a number of particularly visible locations, such as along principal corridors and gateways into the town; at the waterfront; and on the escarpment above the town, the roof silhouette is particularly important.

Supplementary planning guidance on the architectural elements and style which give different parts of St. Helier their own distinct character is to be published, which will provide design guidance on the treatment of roof shapes and finishes for each of the character areas which make up the town. This will assist in determining how best to deal with the composition and finish of roof lines.

Useful contacts

Planning and Building Services

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www.gov.je/PlanningBuilding/Pages/default.aspx