

Economy (Architecture and Place Making)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-01287, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on the importance of architecture and place making to Scotland's economy.

14:56

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Scotland has a proud heritage of architecture and place making; it also has a productive present and a positive future. Our architecture and design sector contributes about £1.3 billion of the estimated £5.2 billion per year that the creative industries generate for the Scottish economy, but that is only part of the picture.

Our architecture and design sector generates work in our construction sector, and the value of construction output for Scotland last year was about £11 billion. The construction industry is a significant employer. More than 172,000 people are estimated to be in its workforce, to which are added about 11,000 people in the architecture and design sector. We can immediately see the importance in economic and employment terms of architecture and place making to Scotland's economy.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Fiona Hyslop: I will move on.

Each period in Scotland's history is marked by the way in which our buildings and places have responded to challenges—whether they were economic, social or cultural. I was reminded of that on Friday when I visited the restoration project at Dunoon burgh hall. As we shape the future for Scotland's built environment in the 21st century, the challenges at the forefront of our minds are climate change, the economy and the need to secure sustainable growth.

These are challenging times, and we need to apply the commitment, vision and sense of purpose to creating places of value that can stand comparison with our successful historic places. I quote John Ruskin:

"Our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves what shall be true for the future."

The debate provides an opportunity to consider why architecture and place making are such a vital part of our cultural identity and to set out the steps that the Government has taken from a policy perspective to ensure that we manage and

develop our built environment responsibly and creatively. In that regard, I welcome the Labour amendment.

In 2001, Scotland became the first country in the United Kingdom to adopt a formal policy on architecture, and a renewed statement was published with broad cross-party support in 2007. We are now building on the policy statements that the previous Administration published.

I intend to develop a new architecture policy statement, to be published next year. In doing that, we will again engage with professional institutes such as the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, the Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland. We will engage with the many other bodies and agencies that have an interest in the quality of our built environment, such as the Scottish Civic Trust and private sector organisations such as Homes for Scotland. Our new policy can also be informed by today's debate.

Through our new agenda on place making—through design, planning, construction, architecture, regeneration and development—we want to create places with which people can identify and which succeed in bringing together activities and services for people to fulfil their potential in business and in society.

The story of Scotland's places is, of course, a fascinating one. The formation of many of our cities, towns and villages has been rooted in developments of trade and commerce.

The idea of planning new settlements in Scotland goes back as far as the 12th century and the burghs of David I, when the notion of planning for development, commerce and governance took root. More than 30 Scottish burghs came into being as a result, such as Dumfries, Kinghorn and Montrose.

The architecture of Edinburgh's new town reflected the values of the enlightenment, and the elegance of squares and crescents based on classical precedents was introduced to other Scottish cities.

The growth of Glasgow in the 19th century was fuelled by its place at the heart of the industrial revolution. Its Victorian built legacy is testament to its economic prowess.

In the 20th century, the desire for social change introduced a modernising agenda and saw the creation of new towns and comprehensive redevelopment. We also saw Scottish architects and planners take up the challenge of Sir Patrick Geddes to conserve and celebrate our historic cities within the context of an emerging focus on regeneration and communities.

As we can see from those very short historical perspectives, the making and remaking of places must respond to change in creative ways. We must also take account of issues of climate change and resource usage in the 21st century.

On a recent visit to Stirling to attend the Architecture and Design Scotland skills symposium, I was struck by the remarkable heritage and setting of the city, which lies at the heart of Scotland. A key challenge for Stirling now is how it can create a future that takes the wonderful heritage at the heart of the city and builds on it to create a more vibrant and successful city centre. ADS facilitated a three-day event with professionals, politicians and communities working collaboratively to express a vision of what is desired and how to achieve it. We need to see more such collaborative working taking place so that we can share our skills, vision and best practice about architecture and place making.

We cannot afford to be wasteful with our existing building stock or overlook opportunities within it. We know that we have fewer resources available to us, so we need to be smarter about reusing existing buildings. A careful combination of heritage and development often provides a catalyst for success when we aim to create thriving places that bring together business, housing and recreation with opportunities to socialise in public places.

There are strong social, cultural and economic arguments for adaptation and reuse of buildings. Retaining traditional buildings, neighbourhoods and landscapes can conserve valuable resources, contribute to healthy communities and help to define and protect our national identity and retain our sense of place. As the historic towns forum has noted, there is a strong

“relationship between the quality of the built environment (old and new) and an area’s ability to attract investment.”

Demolition is inherently expensive. Construction waste—120 million tonnes annually—is estimated to make up one third of all landfill waste in the UK. Restoration is a sustainable option, as it tends to use fewer resources but provides more employment. New construction is seen as 50:50 labour and materials; restoration and renovation can be as much as 75 per cent labour. So, for every pound spent we might get twice as much local employment and use around half the resources.

Neil Findlay: The cabinet secretary has just talked about labour. In her motion she recognises that creating high-quality buildings and places requires skilled construction workers. Is she aware that the eight major electrical companies in Scotland are seeking to withdraw from national

agreements, which would deskill the industry and cut wages by 35 per cent? Will she meet me and a deputation from Unite the union to discuss that situation, because it is a critical issue for the construction industry in Scotland?

Fiona Hyslop: The construction industry is important to Scotland. That is one of the reasons why we as a Government brought forward capital investment, and it is why this year and over the spending review period we are investing £11 billion in capital.

On the member’s invitation to meet Unite, he might want to speak to some of my back-bench colleagues who tried to have such a meeting yesterday but were, I think, somewhat thwarted.

I am happy to correspond with the member. Fergus Ewing has responded to a letter that I wrote to him on behalf of my constituents, who are raising concerns that are similar to those that the member raises. I am sure that Fergus Ewing will engage on that issue.

Adaptation also supports our low-carbon economy targets, as the City of Edinburgh Council’s successful pilot of slim-section double-glazing has proven.

Areas that have developed incrementally over time often support a mixed business use much better than areas that have been comprehensively redeveloped within single-use zones.

Refurbishment of older buildings, especially those of heritage value, usually acts as a catalyst for wider regeneration, such as in the merchant city in Glasgow and in traditional manufacturing areas such as Clydebank.

Reusing and adapting older buildings also helps to foster traditional building skills. We want to establish a world-leading system of traditional skills training that meets the needs of a modern, innovative and competitive construction sector. I launched the Scottish Government’s traditional building skills strategy earlier this year and announced a national conservation centre in Stirling as the focus for raising standards in the traditional building sector. Yesterday I visited phase 1 of the project, at the fantastic new Forth Valley College campus in Stirling, where a new Historic Scotland stonemasonry training facility is being created. It will open next summer and will be the best in the UK. Our investment in the national conservation centre, together with Historic Scotland’s commitment to recruit an additional 30 apprentices over the next three years, will help to sustain and develop the traditional building skills that are needed to secure the future of Scotland’s traditional buildings and support the wider economy.

The value of regeneration, renovation and reuse also has an economic impact for the construction, architecture and design sectors. The Government believes that the 20 per cent VAT on works to existing dwellings acts as clear disincentive to reusing existing buildings. That is why we are calling again on the UK Government to reduce VAT to 5 per cent for renovations, repairs and home improvements. A VAT cut would produce a stimulus for the construction sector, which would support growth and make it more attractive for people and communities to invest in homes and neighbourhoods across the country. Our request has huge backing in the country, and the UK Government should respond to it.

Heritage and new design are often perceived to be in conflict, but one of the great strengths of Scottish architecture over recent years has been its ability to respond well to existing settings. We continue to support the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland Andrew Doolan award. There have been a number of winning projects, such as Dance Base in the Grassmarket, the Pier arts centre in Orkney and last year's winner, Shettleston Housing Association, that demonstrate great care as well as innovation in fitting with their surroundings. Our recent publication "New Design in Historic Settings" highlights a number of case studies that promote an enlightened approach. Whether new or old, well-designed places and buildings should be seen as an investment that adds value.

The importance of walkable, connected streets and neighbourhoods is at the heart of our policies on the built environment. In our policy "Designing Streets", which we published last year, we encourage an approach that places great emphasis on responding to context in innovative and sensitive ways. We want to ensure that street design derives from an intelligent response to location, rather than the rigorous application of standards regardless of circumstances.

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): The other year, I was involved in a very successful charrette in Aberdeen, which was backed by the Scottish Government and which many people complimented. Does the cabinet secretary see charrettes playing a bigger part in helping to plan new and existing streetscapes? I think that a charrette is an extremely worthwhile exercise.

Fiona Hyslop: Absolutely. The Scottish sustainable communities initiative was launched three years ago with the idea of taking forward the issues associated with the charrette programme, working across Scotland to support new ideas on sustainable development. I attended the one at Lochgelly and I certainly support the idea of involving all the professionals, but, more important, having the community at the heart of

the exercise—a point that is reflected in Labour's amendment. I know that my colleague Aileen Campbell, who will wind up the debate for the Government, will want to address those issues. The idea of engaging communities in such a worthwhile way is a very exciting proposition and I am glad to have Kevin Stewart's support.

The Scottish Government was involved, along with Highland Council and others, in the promotion of Scotland's first national housing expo in Inverness from its inception. That was a fantastic opportunity to bring the best architects together in the design of innovative, sustainable housing, showcasing the quality of our architecture and design. It attracted 33,000 visitors—including me—from all parts of Scotland, the rest of the United Kingdom and abroad, and strongly stimulated public debate about design, sustainability and place making.

Within our new economic strategy, we recognise that capital investment is the key to economic recovery and we are prioritising our capital spend in order to maximise the impact on jobs and the economy. Our focus on infrastructure, development and place will harness the strength and quality of Scotland's cities, towns and rural areas. Through our policies on architecture, planning, heritage and street design, we aim to see a new culture that respects, protects and enhances the unique natural and built environment of our country and contributes to a more sustainable future.

The focus of today's debate will be on the importance of architecture and place making to Scotland's economy, but I close by stressing that the three key factors in place making—the economic, social and environmental concerns—are inextricably linked. Truly sustainable places are those that are successful economically because they provide a quality environment and a quality of life that attracts business, residents and visitors. Scotland's economic success tomorrow is closely linked to the quality of places that we create today.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the importance of high-quality buildings and places and the vital contribution that they make to Scotland's economy as well as its cultural identity; acknowledges the importance of sharing skills, vision and practice in design and placemaking and the need to address the effects of climate change, engage communities and develop Scotland's skills base; recognises this, and the previous, administration's development of architecture, planning and design policies; acknowledges the economic benefit of reusing existing buildings, and calls on the UK Government to reduce VAT for renovations, repairs and home improvements to 5%, which would act as a significant stimulus to the building industry.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There is a bit of spare time in the debate, so we can be generous until the time is used up. Therefore, we would welcome interventions.

15:10

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): It is a pleasure to speak in the debate, which is on an issue that is always topical and never irrelevant. However, I have a cautionary word to say. Casting my mind back to a previous session of Parliament, I remember a debate on architecture that was scheduled and that I was very much looking forward to leading but which, unfortunately, had to be postponed for some time because, two hours prior to it, one of the roof beams in the chamber came loose.

As I was growing up in Glasgow in the 1960s and 1970s, it was impossible not to be aware of the widespread change that was going on around me. Whole communities were moving from overcrowded and often insanitary tenemental flats to entirely new communities. Some of them, which were designated “the Glasgow overspill”, were outwith the city in new towns such as Cumbernauld and East Kilbride; Drumchapel, Easterhouse, Castlemilk and Pollok were located on sites on the periphery of the city; and a third group, mainly comprising multistorey flats, were built in existing communities.

Many of those new communities thrived, while others have become more successful in the longer term after they were revitalised and sometimes reduced in scale. Unfortunately, some of them failed, such as the multistorey flats in Red Road, where I lived for most of my childhood, or developments in the Gorbals. Although the reasons for that failure are complex, the blame for much of it can be laid at the door of those who planned and designed homes without thinking about the facilities that were needed to sustain them. It is sobering to think that some of those developments were, at the time, lauded internationally and that they won prestigious awards for their architects.

The irony is that those communities were designed with the very best of intentions: to address a real social need and to provide good housing with decent-sized rooms and a bathroom and kitchen for every family. However, in the drive to do that, the idea of the place—or the community, as I prefer to call it—was overlooked. As a child, I sensed only the enthusiasm that families brought with them to the new homes. However, even then, I was aware that my mum had much further to go to shop, that my school was overcrowded with portakabins in the playground, that the bus was often too busy to stop and that the two lifts in my building, each of

which held only eight people, simply could not cope with the needs of a building that more than 400 people called home. That was no joke if you lived on the 30th floor.

In nearby Springburn, the situation was perhaps even worse, as communities were split to accommodate roads or, perhaps more accurately, our dependence on cars. A vibrant shopping and social district was changed for ever and much of its character was lost, which many people regret to this day.

The motion talks about

“the importance of sharing skills, vision and practice in design and placemaking”.

I heartily agree with that sentiment, but we must go one better and learn the lessons from the developments of the 1960s and 1970s, good and bad. We need to build on the models of successful regeneration in recent years, always ensuring that local people are at the heart of decisions about regeneration and planning in their communities. Similarly, we should remember that the thing that Glasgow got spectacularly correct was recognising, before it was too late, that people like living in traditional tenements and communities, which led to the halting of the wholesale demolition that had been planned. Many Victorian tenements in Glasgow and other cities were saved and adapted rather than demolished, which will allow them to serve the housing needs of those cities for many more generations to come.

However, good housing alone does not tie us to the areas that we live in. It is the character of the locality that does that, and it is the distinctive nature of the architecture and the shared sense of community and history that help us to have that feeling of place and the comfort of the familiar.

Our older buildings are invested with materials and energy as well as history, and we need to be more creative about reusing them as well as preserving them. I congratulate Maryhill Housing Association in my constituency on its innovative project to convert the very old Maryhill primary school building into very modern homes.

Our architectural heritage is, of course, important to our tourism. When people think of Scotland, they often think of Edinburgh castle, Stirling castle, the Glasgow School of Art or one of the many other Rennie Mackintosh buildings that our country has to its credit. Therefore, I very much welcome the Scottish Government’s investment in traditional building skills, which builds on the good work that Historic Scotland and its partners have done. However, it is important that we do not lose the expertise and experience of conservation and archaeological staff in local authorities, or the experience of the staff at Historic Scotland. I note with deep concern the 30

per cent decrease in funding to Historic Scotland over the next three years.

Fiona Hyslop: I certainly agree with the member's sentiments, and I reassure her that the Government's policy of no compulsory redundancies extends to Historic Scotland. I very much value the staff that she has mentioned.

Patricia Ferguson: I am grateful for that reassurance, and I hope that the staff at Historic Scotland are reassured, too.

Like the Scottish Government, we believe that a change to the VAT system would benefit the economy, and we have been saying so for some time. It is the case that, in times of recession, people are more inclined to extend or improve their homes rather than move to a bigger one. We should do everything that we can to encourage such decisions, but we need to ensure that the standard of our buildings, public and private, historic and modern, is maintained, and a change in the VAT rate on renovations would be an effective way of ensuring that our buildings remain in good condition, while preserving jobs in the construction industry and helping architects to remain in practice and in jobs.

We must also think to the future and recognise the need to address climate change in our building methods, as the Government's motion suggests. I recently visited the Glasgow house, which is a partnership between City Building, Glasgow Housing Association, PRP Architects and Royal Strathclyde Blindcraft Industries. Those organisations have come together to create model homes that are energy efficient and built from materials that are recycled or come from sustainable sources. They are insulated to an extremely high standard, their windows are orientated to capture the sun, and the heating system is efficient and easy to use. Overall, they are houses that are easy to build and which cost approximately £100 a year to heat. Such houses must be the way forward, and we should congratulate the partnership on its innovative approach to housing, which I hope the Government will recognise and promote.

The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Aileen Campbell): I have visited the Glasgow house as well, and I concur with many of the points that the member makes. The buildings are attractive not just because of their carbon-reducing nature and energy efficiency, but because they are well designed and well decorated inside.

Patricia Ferguson: That is absolutely right. In a sense, the minister's comments are central to my point that it is not just a case of creating good housing; good housing must be somewhere where

people want to live and will continue to want to live in the future.

If, as I suggested earlier, communities are about more than just good housing—I think that they are—we must also consider the environment that people live in. In our amendment, we make the point that too often in our communities we see land being left fallow after demolition and becoming an eyesore. It often becomes a place where antisocial behaviour and fly-tipping prevail.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Does the member accept that one of the problems in Glasgow has been that more and more developments have been crammed into every little space in the west end? If we restricted development in the west end, that might help brownfield sites in other parts of the city.

Patricia Ferguson: The member has a point, but the issue goes wider than those sites in the west end, as I will come on to explain—if he will bear with me.

At the same time as those brownfield sites are becoming eyesores and places where antisocial behaviour prevails, the green belt is being eroded by new developers. I urge the Scottish Government to do everything in its power to encourage the use of such brownfield sites and to actively prioritise their development where possible.

At a time of reduced spending on housing and construction more generally, I recognise that many of those areas are in effect stalled spaces. A small amount of investment to carry out minimal landscaping and maintenance until a use is found for the land can make a huge impact on an area and help local communities to feel safer. It might even encourage developers to come in over the longer term.

I commend Glasgow City Council for its initiative, which provides small grants to help local communities turn such land into cycle tracks, community areas for growing or wildflower meadows.

We need all levels of Government to address the issues that have been raised in this debate, because they all have responsibilities. We produce excellent architects and skilled tradespeople, and we are a country with fantastic natural assets. However, if we cannot employ those architects, and if we downskill our tradespeople—as some companies are currently trying to do—and fail to create the opportunities for them to use their skills, we will all be the poorer for it.

I move amendment S4M-01287.2, to insert at end:

“; notes that prioritising the use of brown field sites, in addition to the renovation of existing buildings, would both

protect the greenbelt and enhance local communities, and considers that local communities should be an integral part of any regeneration of their local environment or facilities.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will take the fact that Patricia Ferguson was able to complete her speech today as a good omen for the future of the building.

15:21

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I am pleased to take part in today’s debate on behalf of the Scottish Conservatives. I thank those external organisations that sent briefings in advance, including Architecture and Design Scotland, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, Planning Aid Scotland, Living Streets Scotland, Archaeology Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. All those briefings were useful and concise, and helped inform preparations for the debate.

I will make some general remarks on the subject before looking at some specific examples and issues, including some that are particularly relevant to my region of the Highlands and Islands.

The motion highlights place making. That was originally planning terminology and it has now been adopted by architects and building professionals. Place making is also important to landscape architects in relation to producing public spaces and gathering points that are conducive to and appropriate for communities. Place making is site specific, and when it is done properly it can bring a focal point to a community, thereby improving the community’s social fabric and wellbeing.

The Scottish Conservatives agree with the Scottish Government that the quality of the built environment has the potential to affect everyone, and that the purpose of architecture and urban design should be not only to meet our practical needs by housing ourselves and our activities, but to take account of the social and cultural values of our people and to help to improve their quality of life.

Good architecture and place making are crucial to the health of our economy, as they can make an area an appealing place to live and work in and visit. They can also attract inward investment, which underpins sustainable job creation.

Fiona Hyslop: On the economy, will the Scottish Conservatives support the call for a reduction in VAT to 5 per cent for renovations and repairs? If not, why not?

Jamie McGrigor: First of all, because that will cost £2 billion, and, secondly, because there are

probably better ways to achieve what we want to achieve.

Kevin Stewart: Will the member give way on that point?

Jamie McGrigor: No, not just at the moment.

We accept that architecture is about much more than just building design, although design that is pleasing to the eye is of great value. For example, my local town and royal burgh of Inveraray in Argyll and Bute, which is one of the first planned towns in Scotland, was designed by Robert Adam. To this day it remains virtually unchanged in appearance and produces huge pride among the local inhabitants for its architectural beauty. It does of course have a magnificent castle, which was built much later, but it is the town that has the best architecture.

If we compare that with the woeful architecture in some other places, where 1960s concrete seems to instil depression and even deprivation, it is obvious that enlightened, modern housing developments can inspire optimism and be hugely beneficial. That can be helped by well-designed green spaces that allow people’s imagination to flourish, meaning that we get more poets, artists and writers. I agree with John Mason on the importance of having green spaces within reach of everybody.

I am aware that the Scottish Government’s spending review 2011 seeks to support Architecture and Design Scotland in championing the highest standards in architecture and place making across all sectors and advocating a better understanding of the importance and economic value of quality design in both the public and private sectors. We are sympathetic to those aims but remain of the view, as set out in our manifesto earlier this year, that there is merit in turning Architecture and Design Scotland into a self-sustaining social enterprise free from the Government. Given the pressure on public expenditure, we believe that the Scottish Government should explore such a model.

My amendment refers to the contribution of businesses to economic growth and the need to support them, and it urges the Scottish Government to initiate a review of the planning system to identify barriers that still hinder business growth—something that was also in our recent manifesto. It is a matter of real concern to us that, as Audit Scotland’s recent report highlighted, the cost of submitting a planning application has risen by 40 per cent in the past six years and the cost of processing planning applications has increased by 17 per cent in real terms over the same period. Will the cabinet secretary explain those figures?

Aileen Campbell: I can clarify for the member’s information that there will be a consultation on

planning fees. If he wants to tease out some of the issues, he may like to contribute to that forthcoming debate.

Jamie McGrigor: I am grateful for that information, and I am sure that we will take up the invitation one way or another.

The call for the reduction in VAT on repairs and home improvements has been raised already. I recognise the potential boost that that would provide, but it has to be balanced against the current fiscal position of the UK Government and the anticipated cost of £2.2 billion in year 1 alone. I have no doubt that the chancellor's autumn statement at the end of the month will take into account all the issues and will seek to help businesses and families wherever possible to get over the appalling mess left by the last Labour Government.

The office of the Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy circulated web links for this debate, and I was pleased to see highlighted two examples of good practice in rural design initiatives in my region of the Highlands and Islands.

The Outer Hebrides kit house study has seen architects work with Scotframe Timber Engineering kit house suppliers and manufacturers, the Scottish Government and Western Isles Council to design an appropriate kit house that is both economically competitive and architecturally sensitive to the special Hebridean landscape.

On Orkney, the Scottish Government invited Dualchas Building Design to work with local planners, roads engineers and councillors to take a fresh approach to the development of eight houses in the village of Birsay, which is the ancient capital of Orkney and which contains the nationally important Earl's palace. New proposals emerged following substantial community engagement that reduced infrastructure costs and achieved a higher number of houses on the site with better public amenity space—all great improvements. There are clearly lessons that can be applied to other housing developments in rural communities with particular historic importance.

In conclusion, today's debate is welcome and timely.

I move amendment S4M-01287.1, to leave out from "and calls on" to end and insert:

“; recognises the vital contribution of businesses, large and small, to economic growth and the need to support them, and urges the Scottish Government to initiate a review of the planning system with a view to identifying the barriers that still exist in the system.”

15:29

Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP): I first declare an interest as an honorary fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

The importance of architecture and place making to the economy of Scotland goes without saying, but it does not stand in isolation. That is why I am so pleased that the Government's motion talks about cultural identity and that the cabinet secretary put so much emphasis on the social, environmental and economic success of cities, towns and rural communities and how architecture contributes to that.

In that regard, she also mentioned the Doolan award, which is in memory of the late Andrew Doolan, who will be celebrated in this Parliament on 17 November. I am delighted to be hosting that event. The Scottish Parliament building won the award in 2005, so it is fitting that it is being presented again in what is arguably its natural home. Of course, the Government supports that award, which indicates that it regards architecture as a major contributor to Scotland's economy and the quality of life of Scotland's citizens.

Over the centuries, Scotland has excelled in many disciplines, such as engineering, medicine and education, and of course in many art forms. Among those, I would say that architecture and literature have profoundly shaped our perception of the world, our international profile and, of course, our national identity. The impact of the enlightenment on the physical form of Edinburgh is well known. The contrast between the rationally planned, bright, wide streets and formal gardens of the new town and the dark, narrow passageways of the old town is illustrative of changing ways of thinking—architecture is embedded.

We cannot talk about Edinburgh without talking about Glasgow. Charles Rennie Mackintosh is celebrated worldwide for his unique contribution to architecture. His buildings and his style continue to influence architects from New York to Tokyo, and his finest achievement—the Glasgow School of Art building—still operates, not as a museum but as a fascinating and vibrant art school.

The development of new, distinctive places is something about which I feel very strongly. We need to look ever more closely at the questions of identity and our built environment, and the creation of places of real character. How do we work towards achieving that? I would like to see a public that has greater expertise and skill in contributing to the shaping of its built environment. An interest in the built environment and a concern for architecture are not solely the preserve of a privileged few. My colleague Kevin Stewart mentioned the charrettes in that regard, and while

that may well be a start and an idea to consider, I am not convinced that it is the answer to getting the public to make a real contribution.

Everyone in Scotland has a legitimate interest in the quality of our built environments and how they are formed. Everyone is entitled to live and work in a built environment that they can enjoy. From my own experience in the housing association sector, I know how vital the input of informed users can be in creating places that work technically and in which communities can thrive. I have seen it in action; it can be done, with some forethought.

If we wish to drive up the quality of architecture, we need to provide a favourable climate in which it can flourish. A favourable climate is one in which the quality of architecture is widely valued. In order to get that climate, we must promote, through education and encouraging informed discussion, a greater understanding of the value and benefits of good architecture. We should be innovative when given the opportunity to create new places and innovative in protecting the rich architectural legacy that we have inherited. That is, we should be innovative in terms of the architectural product and in enabling that to flourish.

In that regard, I am glad that our Government has the policy of promoting community asset transfer of precious old buildings. In that context, I refer to Hunter house in East Kilbride. A community asset transfer of such a building could stimulate community involvement in a sense of place, history and culture. That is particularly important in new town communities such as East Kilbride, where we have a couple of bits of really good modern architecture, such as the Dollan baths and St Bride's church, which was a Gillespie, Kidd and Coia design. However, we also have historic architecture that should be cherished.

Reducing VAT for renovation, repairs and home improvements would be an innovative support for such initiatives and many others. It is innovative to promote good environmental practice. It is also innovative to ensure that procurement in Scotland is as efficient as possible and that costs are reduced as far as possible so that small and medium-sized businesses in Scotland are not disadvantaged, whether they are architectural practices or businesses in the construction sector.

The cultural strength of our nation is fundamental to our sense of national identity. The place that is in our minds, our ideals, our history, our aspirations and our vision of the country is implicitly linked with the physical place.

Few people have conveyed that better in the Scottish context than our own Alasdair Gray did. In his novel "Lanark", the stunning visual artist and great writer has a character describe Glasgow as

a magnificent city that we hardly ever notice, because nobody imagines living there. He contrasts Glasgow with Florence, Paris, London and New York—cities where, according to Gray,

"Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger because he's already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films."

We should have such a confident sense of place here in Scotland and show it to the rest of the world. We have artists, designers, engineers, conservationists and people with other skills—working here at home and internationally—who are capable of doing that. We should support them and move forward with a recognition of the importance of place making to the wellbeing of Scotland.

15:35

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab): I am pleased to speak in this important debate. Architecture and place making are important not just to the economy but to our people's wellbeing and quality of life. The cabinet secretary made that point well.

My constituency, Coatbridge and Chryston, has had excellent development during the past decade, which has contributed to the local economy and improved people's health and wellbeing. A major example is the regeneration of Coatbridge town centre. North Lanarkshire Council must be given credit for its hard work to improve the town.

In particular, the new £18 million Buchanan centre development in Coatbridge has transformed a derelict site on the main street into a state-of-the-art community facility, which was delivered in partnership with the council and NHS Lanarkshire. The centre is designed to be a one-stop shop, which will increase footfall in the town centre and in turn drive growth in the local economy. Its success so far is a testament to what can be achieved through good planning and design. Architecture is a matter of taste, of course. I like the building, which is bright and airy inside and has a modern, simplistic style, which blends well with the traditional buildings around it.

Also in Coatbridge, millions of pounds have been invested in new schools, leisure facilities, Coatbridge College and our environment. Indeed, Coatbridge's rise from the ashes of its industrial past should be celebrated. It is sad that some elements among professionals and the media choose to denigrate our town. In 2007, Coatbridge received a carbuncle award and was outrageously and wrongly described by the award's organisers as Scotland's "most dismal" town.

Such so-called architectural awards do nothing to help to promote architecture and place making

in Scotland's towns and cities. Instead, self-appointed judges give negative opinions, with no care for the consequences for local economies or the wellbeing of communities.

The carbuncle judges should get out of their ivory towers and consider the harm that they do with their cynical and nasty so-called awards, which are simply a patronising publicity stunt aimed at selling architecture magazines. It is astonishing that the mainstream press helps such people by widely reporting their judgments. In particular, the plook on the plinth award is an insulting cheap shot at towns that are nominated and can do great damage in relation to future investment and people's view of their environment.

Coatbridge, like many towns in Scotland, is far from the dismal place that the posh promoters of the carbuncle award wanted to portray. Yes, we have challenges, and I would like measures to be adopted that improve the take-up of empty shops, to ensure that they do not lie empty. However, people in post-industrial towns like Coatbridge have worked hard to improve their surroundings. Their health and wellbeing has suffered enough as a result of their industrial past, and they deserve positive support and encouragement for their achievements in improving their environment.

I was born and brought up in Coatbridge and I live there with my family. I am passionate about the facilities that our town has to offer to visitors, locals and people who are pursuing new business opportunities. Of course I want further improvements, but we have good facilities and friendly people. We have fantastic attractions, such as the museum of Scottish industrial life at Summerlee and the Time Capsule, both of which have enjoyed significant investment and modernisation during the past few years, and both of which have reused old buildings.

This year, Coatbridge was awarded a bronze prize in the best small city category of the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in bloom awards. The judges were particularly impressed by the way in which the town's industrial heritage is fused with our more modern buildings. Much of the credit for that positive award goes to volunteers in our communities who were fully involved with projects to improve their town and were assisted by council staff.

The judges were full of praise for the Bank Street canal basin, which has been another beneficiary of investment by the council and British Waterways, representatives of which met me a few years ago to discuss improvements in the town centre. That particular project dramatically transformed the former derelict canal site into a vibrant public arts space, and it is now used for concerts, among other things, and as a gathering place for our young people.

The site sits below our distinctive railway bridges, which are adjacent to a road bridge and the pedestrian bridge over the canal. That gathering of bridges is quite unique, and should be more widely celebrated as architecturally significant. After many years of complaints by me and my colleagues Tom Clarke MP and Councillor Maginnis, the eyesore of peeling paint and rust on the bridges was addressed when Network Rail finally repainted them. They now form an excellent backdrop to a great public space leading up to Coatbridge fountain. That project is a great testament to what can be achieved using ambition and foresight. It combines the best of our industrial past with our modern, forward-thinking town and it demonstrates perfectly the importance that place making can have in driving economic growth. Such projects also show what can be achieved through good planning, architecture and design policies, along with strategic investment and engagement with our communities.

With regard to what Labour's amendment says about greenbelt land, I want to highlight the plight of people in the northern corridor part of my constituency who are fighting an appeal by house builders to develop 39 greenbelt sites, which, for good reason, North Lanarkshire Council did not include in the local plan. My constituents are concerned that their views are not being taken into account, which would be a clear example of non-engagement with communities. They also want me to point out that they feel that this would be an attack on democracy if it is allowed to go ahead despite the massive opposition by local people.

I have facilitated a lobby of the Parliament by representatives on 1 December, and I have written to request that a member of the Scottish Government—not necessarily the Minister for Local Government and Planning—meet the group to listen to people's concerns. I hope that that request will be accepted.

15:42

Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I draw members' attention to my entry in the register of members' interests.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the subject matter of this debate. Architecture is the most public of our arts. It cannot be ignored. It affects the way in which we live, how we feel and our sense of identity. We can escape from Picasso if we want. We can escape from Da Vinci—perhaps even from his code. We can even escape from the Glasgow boys. However, we cannot escape from our architecture and our built environment. We cannot ignore it.

We also cannot easily escape from some of the mistakes of the past, the dismal architectural and

planning mistakes. I judge policies by their outcomes and I am forced to reflect that in the latter half of the 20th century, after the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, we did not build all that much that we can be proud of or that future generations will admire as the listed buildings of tomorrow, and our planning system did not prevent the intensification of many of our social problems or the loss of community.

Those failures are symptomatic of a state in decline—the UK state—and the withering of the union and its associated creative energy. Architecture mirrors our triumphs and our failures. It can lift us up or it can drag us down. Like any art, it also expresses our deepest feelings, our confidence and our sense of wellbeing.

As an optimist, however, I see signs of hope in Scotland in this early part of the 21st century. This building, this Parliament, is a metaphor for that hope and for a rediscovery of our Scottish identity. As a newcomer, I find that this building is growing on me. It seems to reunite the old Scotland with the new. Queensberry house exemplifies a respect for the past; the new part of the building exemplifies our newly awakened confidence and our internationalism. It is an interesting and complex building, and each part of it is interesting and complex just as each part of Scotland should be. Each part of it is different but linked by a common theme, just as Scotland has its regional variations and vernaculars that are linked by our national identity.

However, Scotland needs more than just one fine house. I have been encouraged, therefore, to see good examples of architecture springing up in the past few years. I am encouraged to see movements towards place making and masterplanning, which offer a means of reconnecting people with place—because if buildings are important, people are even more important. Architecture and planning must be about people and must be centred on people. We should talk about building not houses, but homes, and we should talk about building not just homes, but communities. Our design talents should not be confined to the blank pages of new communities and new homes but be used to alter and improve our existing communities and homes. Each of them is special or capable of being so; each of them deserves a quality of approach and treatment; and each of them deserves care and craftsmanship.

Every stage of the process needs to be enshrined in quality, from initial design right through to final commissioning. Each participant in the process needs to be enthused with the vision that we are together building a new Scotland. Of course, it will cost in labour, effort and the care that we bring to bear, and it will cost money to

build a new Scotland that is truly fit for the 21st century. However, in that great labour we will rediscover our confidence, our capability and our creativity. Perhaps that is why the Westminster Government is so reluctant to assist us and why it refuses to contemplate reducing VAT on repairs and improvements to help Scotland's hard-pressed construction industry. Perhaps that is also why it refuses to contemplate adequate borrowing powers for Scotland so that we can properly fund that work, and perhaps that is why it refuses to devolve corporation tax so that Scotland's construction sector can become more competitive. Perhaps the Westminster Government is too feart because it knows that, in that great endeavour of building this new Scotland, our growing national pride will necessarily propel us towards independence.

In closing, I pay tribute to my fellow Highlands and Islands regional member, Jamie McGrigor, who seems to be the only member from the Tories and the Lib Dems who is not too feart at least to come to the chamber and stand up for Scotland's built environment. However, I have some sympathy for him in trying to defend the indefensible.

15:49

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): I declare a small interest as the tenant of a listed building although, as I am the member for Edinburgh Central, it is perhaps no surprise that my constituency office is in an historic and conservation area. Edinburgh is one of a kind. We already have a sense of place that municipalities the world over can only dream of. Along with the festival, that atmosphere and ambience is the cornerstone of our international tourism and business appeal, and it is one of the reasons why so many people fall in love with the city and move here—I include myself among them.

The Scottish Government's current set of national outcomes recognises and cherishes that strength for Edinburgh and for all of Scotland:

"We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations".

As a national outcome, it is well said and well timed. It cannot be repeated often enough. The vagaries of architectural fashion have shown that they can, in months, effortlessly destroy heritage that has taken centuries to develop. In Edinburgh, we have the vandalism that is the St James centre, the narrow escape from the Caltongate development, and the Missoni hotel, which is better than the old Lothian Regional Council headquarters, but then a bandage is better than an open wound. The Parliament's design is novel and distinctive inside, but it is hardly in keeping with the buildings around it. Some of us still carry

a torch for the Royal high school. Glass and concrete can be found anywhere.

I have heard a lot of concerns about clone towns, but that usually refers only to the shops, which are identical on every high street. Edinburgh has that too. In the Royal Mile, heritage memorabilia—the euphemism for what everyone else calls tartan tat—continues to expand in the face of valiant and welcome, if unfortunately limited city council action. My understanding from the Scottish Parliament information centre is that councils might already have further powers to restrict the more garish displays but they are not willing to put it to the test. I would welcome clearer guidance on that, perhaps from the minister in due course.

Local authorities have to guard against the clone town effect happening to our urban spaces. Residents and visitors alike want to look around them and know that they are in Edinburgh, a world heritage site, not some soulless identikit North Atlantic modernist dystopia that is reminiscent of one of those 1960s campus universities that are only ever used as sets for filming low-budget sci-fi.

No one is proposing to bulldoze wholesale the old and new towns of Edinburgh, but over the decades there have been numerous earnest applications, each of which would chip or have chipped away at the atmosphere. Poor maintenance makes historic buildings more vulnerable to an unsympathetic developer. The Odeon on South Clerk Street springs to mind. It is therefore imperative that the VAT hike's blockage to proper maintenance is swept away.

Like boiling a frog, gradual erosion can go unnoticed until it is too late and history has become a hodge-podge. At least the residents of the new town have a better record at making their voices heard than those in the old town, although sadly it was not enough to defend Princes Street from the fashions of the 1960s and the out-of-town obsessions of the 1970s and onwards.

Historic Scotland's guidance in "New Design in Historic Settings" provides a welcome steer. Historic Scotland singles out the Scottish poetry library as a case study of sympathetic development, but the poetry library is helped by scale. Too often, the developer's objective, even today when the 1960s should just be a memory, is the great new landmark building that will make their name. It is not just a 1960s problem. I look at many of the new builds and wonder what they will look like in 30 or 40 years' time. We must build with the long term in mind.

The sentiment of the residents in the last planning meeting that I attended in the old town was, "Heaven protect us from landmark buildings." Residents have long memories and perspectives.

Above all, they want to be listened to when they talk about the future of their own communities. Whether it was developers' threats to the buildings that they grew up with or the impacts of landlordism when the community was once a year-round community, the worries that they expressed are real. There is an unfortunate legacy of planning as something that is done to people rather than with them, especially in lower income areas. If I make one plea for the new architecture, it is that it should pay heed to the importance of communities' input, whether through charrettes or other forms of involvement.

Human nature leads us to overlook the familiar, and we in Scotland have turned underrating ourselves into an art form. However, what is at stake here is precious. The sense of place in Edinburgh is valuable for not just its economic contribution, but the simple reason that it is irreplaceable. The national outcome cannot be repeated enough because it stresses that we must protect and enhance our built environment for future generations.

Today, the old and new towns can stand proudly alongside Amsterdam's Grachtengordel, Salzburg's Altstadt and many of the other beautiful city centres across Europe that are both preserved and thriving. The city of Edinburgh is not a museum, but if it becomes nothing more than an architectural testing ground, it will not continue to be a vibrant community that offers so much for the entire nation.

15:55

Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab): I am really enjoying this afternoon's debate and hearing about all the different aspects of the subject with which colleagues are regaling us. I welcome the fact that the Scottish Government accepts the amendment lodged by the Scottish Labour Party.

My constituency office is in the ancient royal burgh of Inverkeithing and I believe that our previous Parliament had a meeting there at one stage, so I live and work in an area with a great wealth of history and heritage. I guess I am among the most privileged members of the Scottish Parliament in that I am very fortunate to have an iconic rail bridge and the Forth road bridge in my constituency, and we will soon have the new Forth replacement bridge. The past and the future have been and will continue to be very important to us in my area and in all of Scotland.

Some say that I represent Scotland's golden mile, stretching from those bridges to the former naval dockyard area at Rosyth, where we now have Babcock and the supercarrier work, which is growing day by day. I have massive land areas from the brownfield sites at Rosyth, where naval

activities once took place, to the legacy in Cardenden, in the northern part of my constituency, of what was once open-cast coal mining. Before the strict planning policies there was no remediation for such work and today we still have the scars of past industry. That underlines for every one of us how important planning policy and legislation are so that we ensure that when developers take from our land there is remediation for the people. I have learned nothing that is more important to my people than that fact because farmers and landowners of all different sorts have had to put right what history has left for them.

We have received briefing notes from a variety of sources for today's debate and some points particularly caught my eye for regions that I shall go on to explain. The Royal Town Planning Institute speaks of providing

"the right framework for planning at national, regional, local and community levels to help deliver sustainable change through ... building on the plan-led system through producing visionary strategic and local development plans, as well as pro-active supplementary planning guidance, to provide the framework for delivering sustainable change."

That goes on in many local authorities and we are very lucky to have such talented planning officials and architects in our communities. The RTPI also asks us to engage effectively with our communities and we have heard about that today. I agree with what Marco Biagi said: it is vital that we do that through charrettes and other means, but it is critical, cabinet secretary, to follow through after the charrettes. The cabinet secretary is right about what happened in Lochgelly, and it was welcomed, but it raised expectations and people have not followed through. Will she take that up with the appropriate people? As she will know, Fife Council is controlled by a Scottish National Party and Liberal Democrat coalition. I hope that once expectations have been raised, people are not just left with those expectations without the delivery of any results.

Fiona Hyslop: I am happy to get back to the member about the Lochgelly experience. We must recognise that times are challenging for developers. When the market recovers across the country we must have construction plans ready, but we need to be aware of the economic circumstances.

Helen Eadie: I accept that point to a degree, but some of what we have seen has not helped. Elaine Smith commented on the awards that can blight localities. Lochgelly was also given an award in times gone by that was not very helpful in Kirkcaldy, and Christopher Harvie likened it to the back end of an elephant. Such comments are simply not helpful to communities.

Setting all that aside, we must work with the RTPI and other such people. That is very important. In Rosyth—this brings me to an important point—the community has come together to create a future plan for the Rosyth waterfront, an area that, I hasten to add, has not been accessible to them for more than a century. The community has worked with churches, community councils, trade unionists and developers to create a visionary plan that will afford leisure and recreational activities at the waterfront, and create opportunities for shops, offices and industries to sit alongside residential developments. Yes, half a billion pounds' worth of development can happen. We talk about hard times, but there are developers who say that they have the money, and more developers are going to the town next week with their proposals, so there will be competing developers. I ask the cabinet secretary to go away and ask Fife Council why it is standing in the way of allowing that development. It points to the future and talks about wanting a massive port area, but let us take the world as it is. Instead of hoping for something different in the future, let us take the reality and the opportunities that we have now, so that we can deliver to people who are desperate for the jobs and homes that colleagues have rightly talked about. As the RTPI has said:

"Planning is all about creating great places for people."

Politicians should support rather than stand in the way of local people and their vision for their community.

Finally, I want to make an appeal. I declare a registered interest. I have a love for Bulgaria and an involvement with it, Hungary, Romania and eastern Europe as a whole. I hope that many of our practitioners in architecture, planning and other areas will share knowledge and experience with eastern Europeans and that we can learn from them. Believe it or not, some places in eastern Europe have wonderful architecture. We must take the opportunities that exist. Those places are not too far to visit. We can work with them, and create business opportunities. Many of my constituents have bought businesses in Bulgaria and elsewhere in eastern Europe. Let us support them, work with them and make new friends with the eastern Europeans. I hope that the cabinet secretary will help me with that.

16:02

Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I thank the cabinet secretary for bringing the debate to the chamber. It is one of the reasons why I think that the Scottish Parliament can do so much. For generations, this kind of debate was never heard. Such debates were never heard in Westminster and they are never likely to be heard

there. The fact that we are debating this subject, and in public, means that we start to raise our game.

Architecture has often been seen as the unrecognised art form that lags behind. Mike MacKenzie talks about it being the one art form that we live with all the time, but we have never recognised it as such. It is a bit like design generally: we do not criticise it until it is really bad. If a person has to sit for three or four hours on a badly designed chair, they will think that somebody designed it badly, but they will not think about the design when they are really comfortable and somebody has designed the chair well. As long as something is reasonably pleasing to the eye and seems to work, we are uncritical.

I was thinking about Scottish studies as Fiona Hyslop was making her opening speech. I hope that all the arts in Scotland, including architecture, will be recognised in an educational context. The Scottish Arts Council never recognised architecture. That was not in its portfolio, but Creative Scotland recognises it. Those are good moves that the Government has made. It put down the marker, and I am sure that architects must be delighted with what has happened.

I return to the topic of the debate. I agreed with much of what Patricia Ferguson said, and have written down that the generation before us cleared slum housing that was built in the 19th century, and we continue to clear slum housing that was built much more recently. There is a huge learning curve in that respect. Some of that housing was built only a couple of generations ago.

We cleared people from places where several families on one landing shared one toilet without any running water. We all know about that, and earlier generations of some members' families lived in such conditions. However, it is interesting and relevant to the debate that getting an inside lavvy and a bit more living space were not prerequisites for wellbeing, neighbourliness or a sense of place. I remember people leaving the Gorbals and going to live in Easterhouse, where they would have a dry, lit space with their own front door and where they would not share a bathroom with a bath and a lavatory. Although people were excited about that at the time, it did not work.

Those are the lessons that we must learn. We did not learn them quickly enough. Patricia Ferguson said that we discovered that we had made mistakes with high-rise living and corrected them, but we did not. In the 1950s, it was known to be a disaster, but we went on to build Easterhouse with 40,000 people—the same population as Perth.

Patricia Ferguson: I am not sure that I said what Jean Urquhart suggests that I did. I would not suggest for a minute that multistorey flats can never work. They can and do work extremely well. The problem with the multistorey flats about which I was talking was that they were built for families but were totally unsuitable for that purpose. However, they got people out of unsanitary conditions and, in that sense, they succeeded, although they caused other problems for those communities.

Multistorey flats are not always a failure. They can work well and I can take Jean Urquhart somewhere where they work particularly well, if she is interested.

Jean Urquhart: I stand by what I said. The method that we used to build post-war flats was known to have failed elsewhere. We sent 40,000 people to live in tower blocks with no other services. It did not work. We learned the lesson later on and started to correct it.

Those examples show us that we must think about what we are doing now. The importance of place making to Scotland's economy is that we move into a better place if we recognise the worth of design. Good and bad design may be in the eye of the beholder, but we must recognise design. We must recognise the fact that there are traditions of building in, for example, the Highland vernacular or the Edinburgh vernacular and we must respect them, but that should never stop new design.

We must tackle climate change. We have good examples on that. The cabinet secretary mentioned the expo that we held. That was all about finding a different way of living. Some of the designs at that expo were reputed to have an annual heating bill of between £100 and £150. We cannot afford to ignore that or to ignore new building.

The Government has a duty to try to bring together the developer, the architect and—perhaps more importantly—the master planner. We can do that for no more money. Good design need not be expensive. We must find a way of delivering energy-efficient homes to tackle climate change and fuel poverty. At the same time, we must give people good, well-designed houses where the community becomes more important and services are local.

It is not at all unlikely that we can achieve that. We have really good examples throughout Scotland—a number have been mentioned already—but we often do not know about them. The future must be sharing that information and bringing together the experts that we already have in Scotland to recognise the importance of architecture and place making to our economy.

16:09

Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee City West) (SNP):

The debate has raised a number of significant points that highlight the crucial role that architecture and place making have to play in Scotland's economy and the Scottish people's wellbeing.

I echo the support of colleagues in the SNP group and the Labour group for a VAT cut for renovations and repairs. It is disappointing that that has not been replicated across the chamber. For Mr McGrigor's benefit, I will quote Brian Binley, who is the Conservative MP for Northampton South. He said:

"The Federation of Master Builders has long campaigned for a reduction in the rate of VAT on home repair, maintenance and improvement work, estimating that a five per cent cut could lead to a loss of revenue to the Government of between £102 million and £508 million, but deliver a ... stimulus to the economy of around £1.4 billion in the first year alone. Their estimates also suggest that around 34,500 new jobs in the sector (and 81,500 jobs in the wider economy) would be created by such a measure by 2019. Hardly Plan B but it could be a nudge in the right direction."

I encourage the Conservatives in Scotland to think again about their policy. Ruth Davidson has supported a different policy on computer games tax and has lobbied for what is best for Scotland. I encourage the Conservatives in Scotland to follow the rest of the Parliament and to support what is best for the Scottish economy, which is reducing VAT on renovation and repairs.

It is vital that the architecture of a modern Scotland is visionary, bold and dynamic. I have listened to the speeches from around the chamber on how that is materialising in communities up and down Scotland.

I am sure that it will come as no surprise to members that I consider Dundee to be at the forefront of improving Scotland's architecture. The waterfront development that is progressing there is one of the most exciting projects to be under way in Scotland. The waterfront is a leading example of how projects can be sustained in the long term, be of social and economic benefit to the community in which they are built and—the important bit—be environmentally friendly from the initial construction period through to the years of use.

Construction creates a carbon footprint, which must be addressed as part of any debate on construction. To mitigate that in Dundee, the jewel in the crown of our waterfront—the Victoria and Albert at Dundee—will be constructed as sustainably as possible. The building's cladding will be made from eco-friendly compound stone, which is made from waste materials that are collected from quarries and from recycled industrial waste, such as ceramic, silica and glass

fragments. That will add to the building's sustainability.

It has been acknowledged that the architecture of individual buildings alone is only part of sustainable place making, but another aspect of the V&A at Dundee project that has captured Dundee's imagination and aspirations is the potential to create a cultural centre in our city. Kengo Kuma's design for the V&A is set to become our city's focal point. In the architectural brief, the emphasis was on creating a building that adheres to 21st century environmental and sustainability regulations, and I believe that the design has achieved that.

Kengo Kuma's design will give us not only a visually stunning building that will define the Dundee waterfront for years ahead but a highly flexible building that is adaptable to many functions. Once the project is complete, we will have a sustainable and environmentally friendly building that creates a focal point for visitors and residents alike. The terraced and decked areas that will surround the building and their pedestrian-friendly links to other areas of the city will make for an excellent point of social interaction for Dundee and Dundonians.

The central waterfront project as a whole is expected to create at least 1,000 jobs over 10 years, to generate more than £500 million for Scotland's economy and to contribute an additional £270 million of private sector investment in the project. It has been estimated that the V&A alone will attract some 500,000 visitors in its first year and that 300,000 will visit thereafter. That demonstrates the enormous economic potential for the city.

The project has been possible only because of Government support. I thank the cabinet secretary again for her personal support to ensure that the project proceeded, despite the difficult times.

The University of Dundee, the University of Abertay Dundee, Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise have all worked together to create a functional and practical community in the heart of Dundee's waterfront, which has historically been separated from the rest of the city.

We have already had more than 15,000 people visiting and engaging in the initial exhibition of the plans for the V&A at Dundee and thousands more have taken part in the consultation online, making the V&A at Dundee the recognisable face of the waterfront redevelopment. That enthusiastic response to the consultation shows how engaged with the plans people are and it underlines just how important it is that place making and architecture are responsive to the needs of the population. Somebody said that architecture and

planning should be done with communities, rather than to them. That is absolutely right and it is what we have managed in Dundee—the projects are moving forward with the people of Dundee.

I will finish by picking up on some of the points raised by Living Streets, to which Jamie McGrigor referred, which sent out an excellent briefing to members prior to the debate. One of the points that it raised was that we must invest in the walking environment and ensure that when we are place making, we create spaces that enable and encourage all pedestrians to get around. I will shortly launch a consultation to take forward proposals for a member's bill that will build on the bill that Ross Finnie sponsored in the previous session and seek to prohibit obstructive parking, which can prevent pedestrians from accessing our public spaces. The debate has highlighted the importance of public spaces and I hope that my bill will help to ensure that all members of our society can access them freely.

16:16

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab): I am grateful to be called to speak in what has already proved to be an interesting and informative debate. I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for indicating that the Government's architecture policy statement will be informed by the debate. She might be regretting saying that now, having heard the range of opinions that have been expressed around the chamber. As Jean Urquhart said, beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder—a wide range of views have certainly been expressed today.

I draw to members' attention my entry in the register of members' interests and, in particular, to my membership of the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust.

I noticed that one of the questions that have been asked of new members in recent editions of *Holyrood* magazine has been what job they might have done if they had not decided to become a politician—or, as in my case, if they became one unexpectedly. I am kind of torn between two responses about my ideal choice of career. One answer is that I would have been in social work, but that does not really help me in this debate. So, I turn to my first choice. Given that as a small boy I had a profound Lego obsession, I would dearly have loved to have become an architect, had I the brains, patience or artistic flair to pursue that.

Buildings shape our environment, our working lives and our relaxation. The difference between good and bad buildings can have a huge effect on our quality of life and the quality of our public space. I welcome the inclusion of place making in the debate.

As a Glasgow representative, I am in so many respects a privileged person—perhaps in no respect more than in relation to our built environment. Glasgow boasts great buildings and important spaces, but our built environment reflects change and dynamism as well as landmarks that should be preserved. I thought that Patricia Ferguson made an excellent speech about her experience of life in the Red Road flats and some of the changes in the city that we have seen over the years.

It might be unpopular, but one of my favourite documents is the Bruce report—which was actually two papers—in which the corporation engineer Robert Bruce set out options for the long-term redesign of Glasgow city centre in the post-war years. The report and interesting drawings that are associated with it are well worth a look for a range of reasons. The plans to move railway stations and to open up new expressways and motorways are breathtaking, if not a little frightening, in their scale. Plans to demolish slum housing, combined with options for the demolition of George Square and the creation of new municipal buildings, speak equally of a vision for a brave new world as well as a desire to leave the past behind.

Elements of those various schemes happened—the M8 being the most obvious example. In other areas, the report continued to influence planning through to the days of Strathclyde Regional Council. Many important Glasgow streets and tenements were cleared for new super-road arteries that were never built.

Architecture and design are important and stimulating, not least because in the kind of pencil drawings that are in the Bruce report we can see glimpses of a future that never came, albeit that we might be thankful for that.

John Mason: The Glasgow transport museum, which is an iconic building, cost somewhere between £70 million and £100 million. For the same money, we could have had a simpler building and been able to replace some of our primary schools. How do we tie up having iconic buildings and suchlike with being able to spread the money around a bit more?

Drew Smith: I point out to John Mason that Glasgow also has the world's largest municipal art collection. There are choices to be made and balances to be struck. Of course we need investment in schools, but I am sure that, if the member looked at Glasgow City Council's record in its school building programme, he would be impressed by what has been achieved—although, unfortunately, things have slowed since 2007. I certainly think that there is a place for iconic buildings.

As a world city and home to thousands of people, Glasgow has, for better or worse, been influenced by the thinking of Sir Basil Spence as much as by the surviving works of George Gilbert Scott, Alexander Thomson or Charles Rennie Mackintosh, or by the outstanding Catholic churches and commercial buildings of my own favourite practice, Gillespie, Kidd and Coia, which Linda Fabiani has already mentioned. In Glasgow today, the key skills of building design and planning are taught in our colleges, universities and, of course, the Glasgow School of Art. Whether undertaken at a Park Circus architecture practice or as part of an apprenticeship with City Building helping to construct the Glasgow house, these careers provide worthwhile and rewarding work.

Buildings do not exist in isolation any more than people do. They can either make or spoil spaces; in Glasgow, we have examples of both. Living in Glasgow's unique west end, which is a mix of Victorian estates, pre-urbanisation industrial and residential buildings—particularly around the River Kelvin—the University of Glasgow's postmodern concrete towers and many new buildings and older buildings that have been given a new lease of life, I am acutely aware of the importance of planning and good design to communities where the built environment is considered precious.

However, good buildings should not be the preserve of only affluent communities. Investing in the skills that are required to make and maintain better buildings and places can benefit all Scotland. The new school and hospital building programme that was implemented in the years after 1997 has given us many fine new public buildings; however, it is probably the case that the quality of many of those buildings improved as capacity improved and more were built. Indeed, I visited one of those buildings—Hillhead primary school—just last week.

Architecture and design should be seen as a Scottish success story and I hope—indeed, I am sure—that in having this debate the cabinet secretary is signalling her intention to invest in and celebrate our skills and innovation, as well as her determination to ensure that the Scottish Government gives even greater priority to the challenge of constructing sustainable buildings and places.

Finally, I wish to associate myself with the remarks that were made by the cabinet secretary, Patricia Ferguson and others on VAT for building extensions. I was particularly impressed by Mike MacKenzie's ability to connect the issue of constitutional change with VAT relief for conservatories. It was very cleverly done.

I encourage members to support Patricia Ferguson.

16:23

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): I refer members to my declaration in the register of members' interests as a North Lanarkshire councillor and member of North Lanarkshire Leisure Trust.

I am a Lanarkshire lass, born in Motherwell, and the closure of the Ravenscraig steel works brought me to the cause of Scottish independence. My overwhelming memory is of a skyline that was dominated by the gas holder and the plant's three cooling towers. Indeed, it affected my formative years so much that I believe I would prove to be an interesting study subject for gestalt theory practitioners. When I drive between Motherwell and Wishaw, I am still surprised and confused by the absence of the towers on the skyline.

It is because of the dramatic and lasting impact that our environment can have on our appreciation and enjoyment of our home towns that I believe that place making—and getting it right—is so important. As Mike MacKenzie pointed out, we cannot escape our built environment and although I mourn the loss of the steel works to the area's economy I do not mourn the loss of the view.

At more than 455 hectares, Ravenscraig is one of the biggest brownfield sites in Europe and presents North Lanarkshire Council with one of the country's greatest place-making challenges in recent history. Its size is equivalent to 13 London Canary Wharfs or 700 football pitches and it is almost twice the size of the development site for the 2012 London Olympics. It is uniquely placed to benefit from Scotland's current infrastructure and it is set at the heart of Scotland's central belt.

Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab): I agree entirely with Clare Adamson about the importance of the Ravenscraig development, but does she agree that it was disappointing that the Scottish Government reduced Ravenscraig from a development of national importance to one of regional importance?

Clare Adamson: Michael McMahon knows very well that the failure to set Ravenscraig as a development of national importance belonged to Jack McConnell, the then First Minister of Scotland and MSP for Motherwell and Wishaw. The member should direct his questions to Lord McConnell, not to the Government, which inherited the situation from the Labour Administration.

Ravenscraig could provide many local and national benefits. Its redevelopment has been a long time coming. It is estimated that Ravenscraig steel works at its height supported as many as 10,000 jobs in the Lanarkshire area, so the loss to the community is so much more than the loss of the 770 jobs at the plant's closure.

In September 2009, the doors of the new £70 million Motherwell College campus opened for the first time, marking the completion of the first major regeneration development at Ravenscraig. The college includes a five-storey state-of-the-art teaching block and has an iconic circular residential building that reflects the former Ravenscraig cooling towers.

The theme of referencing the former site has continued in the £32 million Ravenscraig regional sports facility, which was funded by the Scottish Government in conjunction with North Lanarkshire Council and Ravenscraig Ltd, and which opened its doors to the public in September 2010. It is a fabulous sporting facility that has already delivered real benefits for sport and recreation. I believe that it is a beautiful building. It is designed to resemble the coils of steel that rolled off the production line at Ravenscraig. Ravenscraig sports centre was highly commended in the community benefit category in this year's Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors awards. The new facility has green credentials, too. The designers, mindful of its carbon footprint, designed it to use as much natural daylight as possible, with north light windows in a striking serrated roof that bring natural light into the main activity areas.

Linda Fabiani mentioned the importance of innovation. Perhaps the most exciting and innovative part of the regeneration of the Ravenscraig site is the development of the Building Research Establishment innovation park. The park will be used as a housing demonstration project that incorporates new technology in energy performance and sustainability. Building Research Establishment Scotland will create up to six full-scale demonstrator houses at the innovation park, which will seek to point the way towards how houses of the future will tackle affordability, energy efficiency, recycled materials, carbon emissions and sustainable methods of construction. The site will build on the lessons that have been learnt from BRE's first demonstration centre, which pioneered the use of groundbreaking technologies such as wind turbines, rainwater harvesting, heat recovery systems and recycled waste timber, in the homes. The innovation park can inform our future choices about the built environment and place making.

I will conclude by raising a local concern. The Ravenscraig site has much potential and presents many challenges, but we cannot forget that it should not eclipse the existing towns of Motherwell and Wishaw. The development must complement regeneration in and benefit the existing towns. I welcome the award to North Lanarkshire Council of £2.745 million from the Scottish Government's town centre regeneration fund to support a series of projects that support physical regeneration, including of Motherwell and Wishaw town centres.

Ravenscraig has many challenges, not least of which is the current economic climate. It has the potential to house 10,000 residents and to have two new schools and a retail park. The Scottish Government has already driven the provision of social housing on the site, which opens to residents this year. The site is a unique opportunity and challenge. The Government's motion will compel the best practice in place making to be brought to bear and applied to its evolution.

16:30

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I confess that when I first read the term "placemaking" in the motion I winced a little, because "placemaking" is not a particularly elegant word. It has the whiff of the council planning committee about it—and I say that with the greatest respect to the many councillors who are present and to the cabinet secretary, who is elegant in all matters.

Although place making may be an inelegant piece of jargon from the 1970s, it has an impeccable pedigree as an idea. Indeed, it has its roots here in Scotland in the work of Patrick Geddes, whom the cabinet secretary mentioned. Geddes is regarded as being the father of modern planning, but he began his working life as a botanist. He believed that the balance that is found in nature should be present in the built environment, too. Like John Ruskin in England, whom the cabinet secretary also mentioned, he worried about the community dislocation that the industrial revolution of the 19th century had caused. Both men believed in social progress and believed that it was essential to link social progress and spatial form. It is a great pity that the 20th century town planners and architects who were responsible for Patricia Ferguson's unpleasant childhood experiences did not study Geddes, but the superorganised machines for living that Le Corbusier favoured, which ripped the soul out of so many of our urban areas.

In contrast, Geddes spoke of the trilogy of place, folk and work, all three of which he believed had to be in balance. He used the old town in Edinburgh as the laboratory for his ideas. In the 18th century, the shift of political power that followed the adjournment of the Parliament meant that the old town became neglected and unfashionable, and it fell into disrepair. Geddes set about reviving the tenements and wynds. He tried to bring different social classes together in residential halls like Milne's court. He gave us Ramsay Gardens and the outlook tower, and regenerated and protected a total of 70 sites. He did not just preach renewal—he practised it by cleaning closes and digging gardens. He was to some extent a

romantic, in that he was returning to an idealised medieval Edinburgh, but without the squalor. Like many members who have spoken in the debate, he understood the importance of place, people and continuity, as well as that of cultural identity, which the cabinet secretary mentioned. That is why I support the calls of the cabinet secretary and of Labour for a VAT reduction on repairs.

When we in Scotland first began to revive Geddes's theories about returning to human-scale mixed communities, we did not always get it right. Many inner-city regeneration projects of the 1980s used brick, which is a material that has very little connection with most of Scotland, which is a land of stone. Geology defines our towns, villages and cities as much as it defines the rocky outcrops and headlands of the countryside. From the Caithness flag on the roofs of Orkney long houses to the red sandstone of Dumfries and the grey granite of Dalbeattie in the south, it contributes to Scotland's sense of locality and diversity, so any talk about place making and architecture in the Scottish context must include mention of stone as a building material. The Government's commitment to retaining traditional buildings and the traditional skills strategy to upgrade those buildings are particularly welcome.

The use of stone does not mean ossification. Stone can be used in design that is innovative as well as being sympathetic to the past. A good example of that from the South Scotland area that I represent is the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick, which makes a bold statement without frightening the puffins or, indeed, the people of North Berwick. Its most notable feature is the exterior wall of whinstone, which looks like a dry-stane dyke, but which acts as a rain screen for the rest of the building, drying out quickly and preventing mould and salt damage.

I would therefore like to draw Parliament's attention to the "Land of Stone" exhibition in the Lighthouse gallery in Glasgow, which explains the use of stone as a building material, and to the work of Architecture and Design Scotland, which looks at the challenges of using stone as a material.

One of those challenges is scarcity. There were 1,200 quarries in 19th century Scotland and now there are 20. However, there have been some interesting innovations, such as snatch quarrying, which involves opening up an old quarry for a short time for small amounts of stone for regeneration. Another issue is landfill; quarries are often used for landfill. If we use them for landfill, we will not have access to the stone to keep our heritage alive.

I draw members' attention to the need to make our heritage buildings sustainable. We are not going to meet our climate change targets solely

through new build. It is easy to make new build sustainable, but the big challenge will be to do that with our older buildings, because 80 per cent of the buildings that will exist in 2050 are standing today.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to Glasgow School of Art last week in my capacity as a member of the Education and Culture Committee. The GSA contains the Mackintosh environmental architecture centre, and it was interesting to hear about the work that it is doing in that area. The communal living of Scotland's stone tenements and lands is ideally suited to the adaptation of communal heating systems, either through biomass, ground-source heat or wind power.

I am sure that Patrick Geddes would approve of that, and I hope that the new architectural strategy will consider coupling preservation of our heritage with preservation of the planet.

16:36

Jamie McGrigor: We have had a largely useful and constructive debate with some good speeches. I thank Mike MacKenzie for his kind remarks and assure him that the Scottish Conservatives recognise the importance of high-quality buildings and place making. I am encouraged that there has been broad consensus on a key issue: namely, the importance of high-quality buildings and place making and their large interconnection with the economic growth that we all want for our communities and constituents.

We can be very proud that our architects and town planners such as Robert Adam, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Patrick Geddes and Robert Matthew have not only given Scotland places of distinction, but have exerted—and continue to exert—global influence.

A number of members referred to the economic importance of our historic buildings. I emphasise the value of that sector, not least in my region of the Highlands and Islands where tourism is such a big creator of employment. Research suggests that as many as 83 per cent of visitors to Scotland come primarily to visit our historic sites.

I welcome Historic Scotland's recent award of building repair grants to a number of important historic properties, including Campbeltown's old courthouse—one of that proud burgh's very oldest buildings—which has been previously listed as a building that is at high risk of being lost altogether.

Mike MacKenzie: Given that the costs that are implicit in preserving and repairing our listed and historic buildings still attract VAT, will Jamie McGrigor give an undertaking that he will put his kilt on, go down and twist the arm of David

Cameron and ask him to zero-rate—or at least reduce—VAT on repairs?

Jamie McGrigor: I have already said that I will not do that. You do bang on about it. If the Government takes VAT off that, it will have to find the money from somewhere else for other things. Perhaps the member would like to come back on that.

The project in Campbeltown aims to repair the courthouse and ensure a sustainable long-term future for the building, which is a very good thing.

Another project involves the Burgh hall in Dunoon, which was recently reconstructed by the notable Scottish architect John McAslan. It is fast becoming a meeting point and an exhibition centre for Dunoon, and I congratulate John McAslan on bringing something back to the town of his birth.

A number of members spoke about architecture's place in greening our society, and I think that we would all support the vital role that our architects and place makers play in helping to reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production. That is very important if we are to meet our green targets, not least on energy efficiency. Our buildings must be environmentally sustainable and resource efficient; I note the Scottish Government's efforts to raise awareness of the green infrastructure, which I suspect we will hear more about.

I agree with the Government's reference to the economic benefit of reusing existing buildings. I have previously championed use of the rural empty properties grant, which seeks to increase the supply of rented housing in rural areas by assisting projects that improve or convert eligible empty properties—including old farm buildings such as steadings and cottages—for provision of affordable rental units. Such schemes are to be recommended.

Patricia Ferguson: Mr McGrigor is correct to highlight the importance of bringing buildings back into use and finding new uses for them. Does he appreciate that the VAT relief that most of us now want would help us to invest more money in local economies and would probably save the Government money in the longer term?

Jamie McGrigor: That is a good point well made, but I do not agree with it.

As I have already said, I agree with the Government's reference to the benefit of using existing buildings. I also want to talk about the price of poor design. It is unusual for me to agree with the Government or Labour, but I agree with a comment in its policy statement "Designing Places" from 2001—all those years ago, when Labour held sway. It stated:

"The price of poor design is paid by people who find their familiar routes blocked, who walk in the shadows of blank walls, whose choices are limited by spaces that make them feel unsafe and unwelcome ... The price is paid by people who find themselves living in newly built suburban housing whose designers gave no thought to the quality and distinctiveness of the place they were making."

That is an unusual piece of prose for a Government document, and I recommend it.

I will focus my closing remarks on the planning system, which I have already asked the minister about. Why does it now cost twice as much to make a planning application as it did in 2005? That seems absurd, and it is why I lodged my amendment.

Aileen Campbell: Will the member give way?

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The member is just winding up.

Jamie McGrigor: I am winding up. [*Laughter.*]

Audit Scotland's recent report "Modernising the planning system" specifically called for greater focus on engagement in planning and greater creativity in the way in which we involve people in planning. If we get those aspects right we will, I hope, see the increase in the efficiency of the planning system that is so important for businesses and jobs. That is what my amendment talks about, and I hope that members will support it this evening.

The Presiding Officer: I call Michael McMahon—I can give him eight minutes.

16:42

Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I do not know whether I will need entirely that amount.

I have enjoyed the debate. Like Helen Eadie, I think that it has given us an opportunity to debate an issue that we do not often get the chance to discuss in the chamber, so I congratulate the cabinet secretary on bringing the debate this afternoon. The debate has also been helped by the fact that members have had the time to take interventions and engage in a discussion. That may be an indication that less is more and that, when we have such debates in future, having fewer speakers and giving them more time to elaborate on the points can help us to have a better debate on a subject that is so interesting.

I congratulate the minister on lodging a motion that allows us to unite—that is vital—and I agree with her argument that investment in creative industries can make an important contribution to other areas, such as construction. She was right to outline that point, as it is important that we consider cross-cutting investment. Investment in less prolific areas can play a vital part in assisting

the delivery of overall economic growth. I agree that we need collaboration with the creative arts in all the areas that she outlined in order to expand the growth that we all want to see in the economy.

There were lots of comments on the need to cut VAT. We cannot support the Tory amendment because it would remove the recognition of that point from the Government's motion. The motion rightly identifies the stimulus that VAT reduction could have on the building industry. That said, I must disagree with Mr MacKenzie. We would benefit from such a reduction not just in Scotland but in the United Kingdom as a whole. It is important that we do not draw a distinction at the border when it comes to trying to help the economy. Scottish companies will benefit from any work that becomes available from a cut in VAT for the building industry down south. Not everything comes down to independence.

In looking forward to the debate, I was drawn to recollections of having the good fortune as a young person to visit big cities such as London, Paris and Madrid. Who could not, regardless of their age, be impressed with the historic buildings in those cities? Their palaces, castles, parks and places of interest have made them interesting for centuries and continue to do so, along with their newer buildings. We can see the contrast between the old and the new, which are sometimes side by side and sometimes in different parts of the city. For example, the Louvre, which is an important old building in the heart of Paris, has a modern glass pyramid in its courtyard; similarly, we can contrast Notre Dame cathedral with the glass square of the Government buildings there.

Jamie McGrigor: I wonder what the member thought about the Pompidou centre.

Michael McMahon: I will come on to that later, because I want to consider the notion of beauty being in the eye of the beholder, to which Jean Urquhart and Marco Biagi alluded.

I am fortunate in that, later in life, having visited those cities, I became friends with an architect from Toulouse called Laurent Ballas. While sharing with me a visit to Edinburgh, he opened my eyes to the importance of looking not only at the buildings but at their functionality, their place in the overall milieu and the contribution that each one makes to the sense of community in the area in which it is located. We looked at the contrast between buildings in the old and new towns of Edinburgh.

I was drawn to a quote that he left me with from Julia Morgan, an American architect who designed over 700 buildings in California, which is not a place that is immune to new ideas. She said:

"Architecture is a visual art, and the buildings speak for themselves."

My friend taught me that every building speaks to and touches our senses, even if the sense is one of distaste.

I remember distinctly walking around the bridges area of Edinburgh with him when he saw the Festival theatre and stopped in his tracks, not only to look at that building's fine architecture but to contrast it with surrounding old buildings and 1960s buildings and consider how they all contributed to the community in that area. Again, it comes down to taste, which brings me back to the question about the Pompidou centre. It is important that we see everything in the round and how each building fits into the broader context of the city and place that we all want to come and look at. As we develop, even a building such as this one, sitting beside a historic palace, although it may not be to everyone's taste, creates a contrast that gets people interested and talking.

Fiona Hyslop: The member makes a good point. One of the real strengths in Scotland's architecture just now is the ability to add new extensions to old buildings. For example, in my constituency, Linlithgow Burgh halls is a very old building, but it now has a Malcolm Fraser-designed extension that makes it more functional. We should celebrate not only the juxtaposition of old and new buildings but the juxtaposition of old and new parts of buildings.

Michael McMahon: I totally agree with the cabinet secretary on that point.

We must take into account what local communities want in terms of architecture, which is a theme that has come through in the debate. How many of the buildings and places that we talk about had the input of local people at the start of the process? Patricia Ferguson quite rightly drew on her own experience in considering 1960s tower blocks, which became high-rise ghettos in some instances, and the monolithic council housing estates, which at one time gave great hope to so many people of a better life but latterly became a bit of a postcode noose around the necks of many young people, holding back their social advancement. However, Patricia Ferguson also rightly pointed out that regeneration turned those buildings and communities round, and the investment in that was vitally important. Even when we get something wrong initially, we can turn it round so that it can enhance the community that lives there and be part of the fabric of that society.

Linda Fabiani: Will the member take an intervention?

Michael McMahon: I was just about to come to Linda Fabiani's speech, so I am happy to take her intervention.

Linda Fabiani: That is very nice of the member, because I just wanted to say that, in all the years I have been here, this is probably the first time that I have agreed 100 per cent with everything that Michael McMahon said.

The Presiding Officer: It is your lucky day, Mr McMahon.

Michael McMahon: Presiding Officer, I told you that I would not need eight minutes, but that has completely thrown me.

Linda Fabiani and Helen Eadie made important points about putting people at the heart of the design of not just individual buildings but how communities are regenerated, including the programmes that the cabinet secretary talked about and the town planning system.

I entirely agree with Elaine Smith that we must try to develop the brownfield sites that exist in communities. I share her concern that, although North Lanarkshire has an array of brownfield sites, the Scottish Government recently allowed reporters to overturn the housing strategy in North Lanarkshire and direct development away from brownfield sites and towards the green belt in the northern corridor.

Planning is vital, but we must bring communities with us so that we deliver on the programmes that the cabinet secretary talked about, which have our support.

The Presiding Officer: I call Aileen Campbell to wind up the debate. Ms Campbell, you have until 5 pm.

16:51

The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Aileen Campbell): My goodness, thank you Tricia—sorry, Presiding Officer. I apologise.

This has been an excellent debate, which has given us a tour of Scotland. It has been interesting to hear about Drew Smith's profound obsession with Lego and to hear that Linda Fabiani has reached agreement with Michael McMahon.

The Government wants a future for our country in which the quality of life of all Scotland's citizens is greatly improved. Every one of us deserves to live and work in environments of which we can be proud, and we all want a prosperous future for Scotland.

The quality of our built environment can motivate and inspire us. It can make us feel good about ourselves. It is also vital to the country's economic future. The Government thinks that a strong and widely supported and understood vision for the future is a prerequisite for successful cities, towns and rural developments in Scotland.

The manner by which we aim to achieve such a vision goes to the heart of democracy. It is vital that the development of Scotland's built environment is inclusive. We want to make the planning process easier to understand, we want greater public participation, and we want to enable participants to see that direct account is taken of their views.

The cabinet secretary talked briefly about what we are trying to achieve through the Scottish sustainable communities initiative. The underlying principle that she described is the taking of a long-term view of development strategies, which is concerned with outcomes and delivery. A modernised planning system, which is focused on outcomes, can help to deliver sustainable growth and development of the right quality in the right places.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): Can the minister reassure members that, for her and across the Scottish Government, the issue is not just buildings but a sustainable future for communities and that the Scottish Government will make connections with transport, schools, sustainable energy and all the other things that we need?

Aileen Campbell: I take on board Claudia Beamish's point. The fact that the cabinet secretary with responsibility for culture opened the debate and the minister with responsibility for planning is closing it shows the breadth of support for the agenda. The member might be interested to know that I launched the document "Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking" the other day, which is about innovative use of green space and allotments, among other things. Of course, Architecture and Design Scotland does work in schools, as Claudia Beamish probably knows, given that she is a former primary school teacher.

Our agenda is twofold. We want to ensure that future developments are consistent with our principles of sustainable growth and we want to help existing developments and communities become more sustainable. However, the translation of policy and guidance into effective outcomes on the ground through the planning system is not easy and successes are not as numerous as we would wish them to be.

Therefore, along with Architecture and Design Scotland, we are working to promote and support practical projects, the benefits of which can be understood, seen and felt on the ground and can be replicated, through successful processes. We are all familiar with the term "charrette"—Kevin Stewart seems to be a bit of an enthusiast—which is one of the ways in which we are taking the agenda forward. A charrette is a design process, which takes place over a number of days. The public, design professionals and project

consultants work together to develop a detailed masterplan for a site.

Charrettes can help to harness communities' deep understanding and knowledge of the places in which they live and work. The approach gives local people a voice, so that they can contribute to the development of well-informed plans, which provide the best opportunities for their communities to flourish. The process is truly inclusive. I hope that that will encourage Patricia Ferguson, who made clear her passion for architecture and place making and warned of examples from the past of people being ignored and of developers having no understanding of how people in the community live and where new development should be created. Jean Urquhart also stressed the need to learn from our past.

Kevin Stewart: I declare an interest, as I am a member of Aberdeen City Council, which I am about to mention.

There has been some discussion today about turning old buildings into modern, sustainable ones. Will the minister comment on the rebirth of Marischal college, which is an old building that has been given a new, modern design with a top BRE environmental assessment method rating, and which is a jewel in the crown of Aberdeen? Does she agree that those who were involved in the project deserve some praise for that?

Aileen Campbell: I am happy to praise that project. I visited it when I visited Aberdeen City Council. It is a great example of the council investing in its community and providing a one-stop shop, similar to that which Elaine Smith described in Coatbridge.

The charrette in Lochgelly was attended by students of planning from the University of Dundee. They were enthused by that process, as are the young planners across Scotland. It was a remarkable success. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: I ask members who are coming into the chamber to please keep quiet. The minister is trying to wind up.

Aileen Campbell: Building on that achievement, we recently launched a new programme that is aimed at mainstreaming that innovative approach. I acknowledge the issue to do with Lochgelly that Helen Eadie raised. I assure her that Scottish Government officials have been working with Fife Council since that project and continue to do so.

The SSCI mainstreaming programme involves a further series of charrettes across the country, linking new projects with specialist design teams. That is intended to embed charrette-style working in Scottish practice. I hope that that gives some reassurance to Linda Fabiani that we are not

taking a do-something-and-then-clear-off approach but instead are trying to empower people to use their abilities, skills and knowledge.

The first of those charrettes, which I attended last week, was held in Johnstone south-west. The next will be held in Callander, and one will be held in Girvan at the start of the new year. A remarkable amount of work was done in Johnstone to engage folk, not only using typical approaches but also going out and enthusing people to come along. That meant that it was not just the usual suspects at the meeting but a breadth of people from the community. They even turned up again last Saturday, at the close of the charrette, despite competition from the Singing Kettle and Stacey Solomon, who was switching on the Christmas lights in Paisley town centre. Through the mainstreaming of charrettes, Scotland is leading the way in how communities are contributing to their future environments.

I should also mention, with regard to the SSCI, that, last month, the exemplar project at Knockroon in Cumnock opened the first phase of a new neighbourhood to the public. Many people, such as Mike MacKenzie and Jamie McGrigor, will be pleased to know that that development looks Scottish and gives the visitor a sense of being in Ayrshire. I suggest that members go and visit it, because it is something that East Ayrshire is proud of. It is also in an area that is one of the most challenging in the Scottish housing market, yet it attracted more than 1,200 visitors in its opening weekend. It is well worth a visit.

The high level of interest was generated to a great degree by the strong vision and commitment of—

Jamie McGrigor: Will the minister give way?

The Presiding Officer: The minister does not have time.

Aileen Campbell: I am in my last couple of minutes. I apologise to Mr McGrigor, but I will touch on planning issues before I close, as I am sure he would want me to.

We want to develop new places like Inverary in the future, and we want to do that well, taking on board people's views and opinions as we do so.

We have launched a couple of new guidance documents. The first is about green infrastructure, which I mentioned to Claudia Beamish, and the other promotes good design in rural landscapes, which is of particular interest to the members who represent rural areas.

This afternoon, we have had an excellent discussion on the value of our historic environment and the need for contemporary design to match the quality of architecture that Scotland has produced in the past. All too often, heritage and

development are viewed as being in conflict. However, we cannot continue to create a heritage for the future without development.

Marco Biagi made a passionate case for preservation and the need to be sympathetic to our history and heritage, with particular reference to Edinburgh. Similarly, Elaine Smith and Helen Eadie made a valuable point about how unhelpful the carbuncle awards are and how demoralising they can be for local residents who are trying to do their bit to improve their area. They do nothing to help Scotland's image internationally.

Joe FitzPatrick and others have made great contributions about the importance of—

The Presiding Officer: You need to wind up now, minister.

Aileen Campbell: I would just like to say that we have had a tremendous debate. Clearly, one of the greatest themes in the debate was community engagement. That is at the very heart of what we want to do, as well as improving Scotland's economy for the future.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are eight questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, in relation to the debate on keeping communities safe, if amendment S4M-01285.3, in the name of Kenny MacAskill, is agreed to, amendment S4M-01285.2, in the name of John Lamont, falls.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-01275.1, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01275, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on protecting Scotland's national health service, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)