STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Inquiry into Victorian government decision-making, consultation and approval processes

Melbourne — 1 June 2010

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Necessary corrections to be notified to secretary of committee
The CHAIR — I declare open the public hearing of the Legislative Council’s Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration public hearing. Today’s hearing is in relation to the inquiry into Victorian government decision-making, consultation and approval processes. Specifically the hearing will focus on the Windsor Hotel’s redevelopment planning process. I welcome Professor Geoffrey London, the Victorian government architect.

All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the Constitution Act 1975 and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Any comments made outside the precincts of the hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege. All evidence is being recorded by Hansard, and witnesses will be provided with a profession of the transcript in the next couple of days for any corrections. I now invite you to make an opening statement, if you wish. The committee will then proceed to questions.

Prof. LONDON — Thank you. I will read from the statement I have prepared.

I, Geoffrey London, of level 2, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne in the state of Victoria, government architect, say as follows: I am the government architect for the state of Victoria. I attend before the committee in my capacity as a member of the Victorian public service. I have been provided with a copy of the code of conduct for Victorian public sector employees (No 1) 2007; the government’s guidelines for appearing before state parliamentary committees; and Parliament’s guidelines on the rights and responsibilities of witnesses. I make this statement from my own knowledge save where otherwise indicated.

My qualifications are: bachelor of architecture from the University of Western Australia; bachelor of arts in fine arts from the Western Australian Institute of Technology; graduate diploma in art and design from the Western Australian Institute of Technology, and graduate diploma (AA) history and theory from the architectural association graduate school in London.

I was appointed to the position of government architect on 28 July 2008. In addition to that role I also currently hold the following positions: Winthrop Professor of Architecture at the University of Western Australia since 1992; life fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects since 2005; member of the Australian Research Council’s College of Experts, since 2008; honorary fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects from this year; chair of the Australian Institute of Australia’s Venice Biennale Committee, and chair of the AIA’s Architecture Australia Editorial Advisory Committee.

I have previously held the following positions: I have been a professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne from 2003 to 2009, and I was government architect of Western Australia prior to assuming this position from 2004 to 2008. Between 1989 and 1996: I was dean and head of school at the University of Western Australia. I was chair of the Committee of Heads of Architecture Schools of Australasia between 1995 and 1996, and president of the Western Australian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects between 1994 and 1997.

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect was established in January 2006. The OVGA, as I will refer to it, provides leadership and strategic advice to government in relation to architecture and urban design. It was created to promote and maintain Melbourne, and Victoria more generally, as centres of design excellence, to deliver quality design in public buildings and to generate sustainable urban design outcomes.

To achieve these outcomes, I provide the following advice to the Premier, ministers, government departments and local government: strategic advice about architecture and urban design on specific projects or initiatives; ways to improve design outcomes for capital works programs, individual projects and broader planning initiatives, and advice on processes that enable better design outcomes to be achieved. This includes initiatives such as the development of design principles and key quality selection criteria to support the selection and evaluation process of consultants and procurement processes related to major public infrastructure and building projects, and the establishment of project design review panels or design quality teams for major projects or key strategic precincts or sites.

I also play an advocacy role and in particular seek to promote an awareness of the importance of good design and achieving high-quality, sustainable design outcomes in Victoria’s built environment. To this end I attend various public speaking events in my capacity as government architect, including to industry, government representatives and universities.
The OVGA publishes the ‘Good Design’ publication series which aims to raise awareness of good design and promote discussion supporting its benefits and value. I provide a voice for architectural excellence within government.

On occasion I am invited to attend and present at professional seminars held by professional peak bodies such as the Property Council of Australia, the Building Commission, the Australian Institute of Architects and the Planning Institute of Australia. This is a key part of my advocacy role in raising awareness and communicating to a broader audience the value and importance of good design.

The OVGA is currently comprised of eight staff members, including me. I have recently advised or collaborated with numerous state government departments and agencies to achieve the best possible design outcomes. As an example, at the invitation of Major Projects Victoria and Arts Victoria, I was a member of the architect selection panel for the Southbank cultural precinct, I attend the project control group (PCG) meetings, chair the project design review panel for the Arts Centre Trust and am a member of the PCG design endorsement committee. My role in those various capacities is to assert the need for design quality and help broker quality design outcomes.

A further example is the Parkville Comprehensive Cancer Centre. At the request of the Department of Health, the OVGA contributed sections in the expression of interest documents asserting the need for quality design and was a member of the panel that short-listed the consortia to go forward to the request for proposal (REP) stage. I am currently reviewing the REP documentation to ensure that sufficient emphasis is given to the capacity to deliver quality design and that this is reflected in the selection criteria. I have been invited to chair the selection panel that will determine the design component of the project. I will have an ongoing design review role during the period of project delivery.

At the invitation of the Department of Human Services I conducted a design workshop which explored how good design could contribute to improving the quality of life for children and carers in the children-in-care program. This involved coordinating a group of invited architects, DHS officers, carers and consultant architects, together with former clients of the program. The workshop was considered very successful by the participants and proposed a number of innovative approaches to the design of these care facilities. Recently a presentation was made to me by DHS and their consultant architects, demonstrating how effectively these new approaches had been incorporated into their modified designs.

I could cite many further examples where the OVGA has assisted government departments and agencies, such as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, VicUrban, the Department of Transport, DPCD, DIIRD, MPV and VicRoads, all to achieve better design outcomes. I am happy to do so if the committee requires.

Local government bodies also approach me to obtain advice on projects. Whether I provide advice depends to a large degree on whether I consider the particular project to be of public significance. Local governments are not required to pay a fee for my advice.

I do not as a matter of course provide advice to private individuals, firms or companies. On occasion private parties do present ideas to me, and I am happy to listen to their ideas if they are of interest or relevance. For example, a prefabricated housing manufacturer recently presented details of a new product to me. This was of interest because of my participation, with DPCD, DHS and VicUrban, in a project which we call DASH — the Designed Affordable Sustainable Housing project.

I have also attended meetings with developers and/or architects in the past who have wanted to advise me of their planned developments. I attend these meetings where they provide an opportunity to learn about proposals that are being mooted for the city.

I will now discuss the Victorian planning process. I do not play a role in the Victorian planning processes prescribed by the Planning and Environment Act 1987. However, an informal voluntary protocol has developed between me and the Department of Planning and Community Development whereby DPCD informally advises me of planning applications for significant projects and seeks my comments on the design and architectural merits of applications.

As an example, last year I was invited by the DPCD to review and advise on the urban design and architectural quality of a significant residential development at 1 Ascot Vale Road, Flemington. The project design team
responded positively to our involvement and the advice provided, and the final design outcome greatly improved as a result of this process. Further key examples where the OVGA has been asked by the DPCD to review and provide design advice for major projects in the central city include the master plan approval process for the former Carlton and United Breweries site; the planning application for the redevelopment of the former power station site on the corner of Lonsdale and Spencer streets, and the development planning application of 80 Collins Street, Melbourne.

I am sometimes invited to contribute to a design review process. This role involves critiquing project designs and providing this critique to both the project design team and the approvals body. This advice is non-binding but comprises part of the body of the advice that is taken into account in planning decisions.

The Windsor Hotel redevelopment: I was first contacted about the Windsor Hotel redevelopment in my professional capacity on 24 July 2009 via an invitation to a Hotel Windsor future plans breakfast on 29 July 2009. My executive assistant dealt with the invitation and declined it on my behalf because I was in Western Australia at the time of the event. My executive assistant did not inform me that the invitation had been made at the time, as she is aware that this is not the kind of event I would normally attend because of its private-sector focus.

On 31 July 2009 I received an email sent on behalf of Mr David Perry, chief executive officer and general manager of the Hotel Windsor, which noted that I had not been able to attend their VIP breakfast at which they had announced their refurbishment plans for the Hotel Windsor and stating that they hoped that ‘this project will enjoy your support’. I did not reply to this email.

On 6 October 2009 I received a letter from Mr Adrian Salmon, assistant director, statutory approvals, DPCD, advising me that the Minister for Planning had received an application for a planning permit for the redevelopment of the Windsor Hotel, and seeking my comments on the application. Mr Salmon’s letter of 6 October 2009 attached a copy of the planning application plans, which included architectural plans and design drawings. The letter also advised that additional material ‘can be made available on request’. I did not request these further documents, as the information attached to Mr Salmon’s letter was sufficient to enable me to form a view on the quality of the design. We accept such invitations from the DPCD as a matter of course, as is evident from the examples referred to in paragraphs 21 and 22 earlier.

On about 10 October 2009 I asked one of my staff members to contact the architects for the Windsor Hotel redevelopment, Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) to request a briefing from them on the project design and the architectural approach. Obtaining such a briefing is part of my usual practice because in-person briefings enable me to ask questions of architects that do not get answered by architectural drawings and therefore enable me to obtain a better understanding of a project’s architectural merit.

On 14 October 2010 Ms Sophie Patitsas, principal policy officer at OVGA, and I attended a meeting with Bill Corker and Ian White of DCM at which we were provided a briefing on the development plans for the Windsor Hotel. Adi Halim and Glenn Coupar from the Halim Group Pty Ltd, the owners of the Windsor Hotel, and Vaughan Connor from Contour Consultants Australia Pty Ltd, a consultancy group that specialises in town planning, also attended that meeting at the request of DCM.

The meeting of 14 October ran for approximately 1 hour. At this meeting Bill Corker provided us with a comprehensive briefing on the rationale behind all the key design decisions that had directed the redevelopment proposal. I asked a number of detailed questions about aspects of the design that were not clear, for example in relation to materials, finishes and the opening of the Windsor’s Spring Street colonnade. Our questions were directed at DCM, who responded in a detailed and comprehensive way.

I have not had any further contact from DCM or representatives from the Halim Group Pty Ltd about the Windsor Hotel redevelopment since our meeting of 14 October 2009.

On 6 November 2009 I wrote to Mr Salmon, responding to his letter of 6 October 2009. This appears in attachment C. This letter informed Mr Salmon that I supported the applicant’s ambition to reposition the Hotel Windsor as the city’s premier hotel, securing the ongoing viability of an important cultural asset for Melbourne. The letter stated also that the proposal demonstrates an intelligent response to the surrounding urban context and develops a compelling three-pronged strategy for the site — namely, the restoration of the heritage hotel, the
introduction of a simple, zinc-clad perforated block on the corner of Bourke and Spring streets to replace the unfortunate addition of the 1960s, and the insertion of a new backdrop building containing hotel rooms.

The letter also stated that collectively, the proposed sequence of urban strategies creates a distinctive and memorable design for the site. It stated that the proposal offers a fully considered and exceptional outcome in terms of urban design and architectural design quality and is likely to contribute in a positive way to the existing precinct. It stated that achieving the full potential of the proposal will depend on these compelling concepts being realised in the detailed design and that it is critical that approval processes include mechanisms that ensure that the qualitative aspects of the design are monitored and that sufficient detail is provided to enable realisation of the high quality being pursued. The letter recommended that a request be made to the applicant for further details on the clear glass re-entrant on Spring Street.

On 17 December 2009 Ms Patitsas and I attended a meeting with Mr Adrian Salmon, assistant director, statutory approvals, DPCD, and Mr David Hodge, executive director, planning services and development facilitation, DPCD, to discuss the comments set out in my letter of 6 November 2009. In particular I wanted to inform DPCD that I was concerned about placing a condition on any development approval that would require that the qualitative aspects of the proposal be monitored and maintained to ensure that the project was of a high quality.

Since the meeting with DPCD of 17 December 2009 I have not had any further contact with the DPCD about the Windsor Hotel redevelopment.

In terms of the deferral of project, an article published in the Age newspaper on 29 April 2010 by Mr Royce Millar titled ‘First strategy on Windsor revamp also a failure’ stated that:

an officer from the Government Architect’s office, which is located in the Department of Premier and Cabinet — proposed —

to have the Windsor Hotel redevelopment deferred until after the state election to avert any political backlash over the $270 million project.

This appears in attachment D. The article also stated that:

State architect Geoffrey London said he was ‘confident’ the idea of postponing the revamp had not been put to the Windsor group by anyone in his office.

I have never suggested that the Windsor Hotel redevelopment project be deferred until after the 2010 state election. I have asked my staff, and they have informed me that they also have never suggested that the Windsor Hotel redevelopment project be deferred until after the 2010 state election.

That completes my statement and I now welcome the committee’s questions.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Professor London. Thank you for your detailed submission and attachments. I will ask Mr Guy to ask the first questions.

Mr GUY — Thank you, Professor, for coming in. I appreciate your very detailed submission to the committee. Just in relation to the 17 December meeting, could I ask who actually called that meeting?

Prof. LONDON — I called that meeting.

Mr GUY — Is it usual for these kinds of meetings to take place on applications similar to this, where you have expressed a point of view, or are they held on a fairly frequent basis?

Prof. LONDON — I called the meeting because of the particular concern I had about the potential of the quality not being followed through. I wanted to make sure that the processes that could be put in place did require monitoring of that quality. It has come to my attention over a period of time that in a number of projects in the city, developers are using certain architects to gain development approval and then they will change the architects midstream as a means of saving costs. Often the second architects who are appointed are not able with the same ability to follow through with the proposals that have been put forward in the first instance.
Mr GUY — When you met Adrian Salmon, he was obviously the person who had initial contact with you about the application. Did you request David Hodge from the development facilitation unit to be at the meeting?

Prof. LONDON — Yes, I did.

Mr GUY — Why was that?

Prof. LONDON — Because I knew that he was involved with the process of making decisions about the building.

Mr GUY — How early on did you realise that?

Prof. LONDON — I cannot recall with accuracy when that realisation came upon me.

Mr GUY — Were you aware of a Windsor redevelopment group already established within the department to manage the application?

Prof. LONDON — No, I was not.

Mr GUY — But you knew that David Hodge was the person to go to in relation to the application within the department?

Prof. LONDON — I cannot recall exactly how that process emerged, but it certainly became evident.

Mr GUY — At the meeting was there any expression of opinion from either of the two departmental officials about the nature of the project or where the project was headed?

Prof. LONDON — I came to that meeting with a particular purpose. My primary aim was to ensure that that intent was got across with some detail and accuracy. This is a meeting that occurred six months ago and I have had I do not know how many meetings since.

Mr GUY — But again, could you remember if there was any opinion expressed by any of the other two from the department at that meeting about that application?

Prof. LONDON — I cannot recall with sufficient accuracy to state if that is the case.

Mr GUY — Were any of your staff, apart from yourself, in contact with David Hodge or Adrian Salmon in relation to the application?

Prof. LONDON — Only at that meeting, which was attended also by Sophie Patitsas.

Mr GUY — And none of your staff from 17 December onward had any contact with Mr Hodge or any other members of the department about the application, that you are aware of?

Prof. LONDON — I am not aware of any contact that occurred between my staff and DPCD staff on this matter.

Mr GUY — Have you asked them that directly?

Prof. LONDON — I have not asked them that question directly.

Mr GUY — Obviously, as you can imagine, there is some interest from the committee in the Windsor matter and the matter that has hindered the government architect’s office. As I said, your submission is fairly detailed and pretty extensive in terms of where you had been in the process.

What we are trying to ascertain, and what I would like to ascertain, is whether there was contact between the department and your office, maybe without your knowledge, and certainly in relation to what appears to have been a situation where there was the development facilitation unit managing that application. As I said, what I would be very keen to ascertain from you is whether or not there was contact, that you were not initially made aware of, from anyone in your office with the development facilitation unit in relation to that application?
Prof. LONDON — I am happy to take that question on notice and respond to the committee, although I should add that I am very confident that no-one had that contact.

Mr GUY — I understand that entirely. I might come back to that in a couple of minutes. This is obviously the $64 million question: were you ever aware of any media plans around the hotel’s redevelopment?

Prof. LONDON — I was not aware of any media plan.

Mr GUY — Are you aware of any other media plans around other applications of this nature or other large applications that come before the government?

Prof. LONDON — No, I am not.

Mr TEE — I am not sure that is a question of relevance on that issue.

Mr GUY — Relevance? We are a committee examining the media plan and you want to ask about relevance?

Mr TEE — You are asking about every project the government has been involved in. I thought we were focusing on the Windsor.

Mr GUY — I apologise for my colleague, Professor. I might move on and then come back and ask a few more later. Thank you.

The CHAIR — Mr Viney?

Mr VINEY — Mr Tee can take the first round of questions.

The CHAIR — Mr Tee?

Mr TEE — Thank you very much for what has been a very detailed and comprehensive overview, both of your role generally but also in relation to the Windsor in particular. In relation to that, as I understand it, your role was that your advice was sought in relation to the Windsor redevelopment proposal. You received a plan from the department. You then met with the Windsor redevelopment people, as it were. You formed a view and that view was communicated in writing to the government. Ultimately you would assume your views would be taken through and communicated to the minister. Is that a thumbnail sketch of the process and your involvement in it?

Prof. LONDON — That is accurate up until the last point. I would not make any assumption about where my advice would go. We give the advice to people in the DPCD and it is up to them to determine how they deal with that advice.

Mr TEE — In terms of your advice, that was the letter of 6 November to Adrian Salmon in DPCD, which you have attached in your statement?

Prof. LONDON — That is correct.

Mr TEE — The last sentence there seems to summarise the letter. You say, and I quote:

The proposal offers a fully considered and exceptional outcome in terms of urban design and architectural design quality and is likely to contribute in a positive way to the existing precinct for the reasons outlined above.

Those reasons are outlined in your letter. For the benefit of the committee, can you just elaborate on the benefits, as you saw them, of the design and the architectural design quality?

Prof. LONDON — Yes, I am happy to go through some of those points. Early on we stated that we supported the applicant’s ambition to reposition the hotel as the city’s main hotel. What often happens with fine old buildings like this that reach a stage where they are no longer commercially viable to run in their original form is that they become privatised. I have seen many instances where large, old, fine buildings which once allowed public access have become apartment blocks. It seemed to me that the plan to retain the Windsor’s use
as a hotel and to connect itself more emphatically with Spring Street was a valuable contribution to the city. That was one aspect that we certainly felt positive about.

Over the years the building has developed some rather unfortunate accretions. You can see plumbing on the facade. You can see windows that have been filled up to sill height to enable bathrooms to be constructed behind them. On the Spring Street facade itself, the openings that once were much more publicly visible to the street have been bricked up to a certain height. The building has become more closed in and a number of the hotel rooms at the rear have become quite unpleasant in their configuration. Our view was that the restoration of the building and the cleaning out of all of those old accretions that had diminished its quality were a very positive aspect of the proposal.

The position was put to us that to make this work as a hotel a certain number of rooms and a certain level of facility was required to enable that level of development, so our judgement was to be based then not on those commercial aspects but on how they dealt with those new elements that were introduced in an architectural manner. The 1960s edition on the corner of Bourke Street and Spring Street is judged by many to be very unfortunate because it attempts to mimic the original form of the Windsor hotel, but it does it in a way that demonstrates that it does not really understand what the original form is about. Plus it has closed that corner off — there is no useful access to the hotel through that corner. With the entry to Parliament Station it has created a very pinched piece of public realm.

The new proposal has the new corner building set back a fair distance from Spring Street edge so there is a new public space out the front. The whole ground floor is opened up so that there are cafes and other forms of access into the hotel. We believe that that produced a much better outcome for the public realm. From the drawings themselves, we had some questions about the nature of cladding on the corner building and also the western cladding on the new proposed bedroom tower.

We asked those questions of the architects, and they were able to satisfy us that those issues had been well considered, but there remained, for us, that nagging doubt that these are only schematic designs, they need to be taken through a detailed design development process and there is always the opportunity for quality to be removed for cost-saving measures, which is why we placed great emphasis on that fact.

The ‘curtain’ building, as the architects described it, which contains the hotel rooms, proposed a response which was intended to reflect sky rather than to be read as a very substantial, solid, masonry lump and we thought, in that setting, that was an appropriate kind of response. The height of it is very similar to the building that is on the corner of Little Collins and Spring and it creates a kind of L-shape around the old Windsor Hotel building itself. It is positioned to the very rear of the site so that it impinges as little as possible on the existing quality building which is being restored.

That is a summary. The materials that we discussed with them, in terms of use, particularly those in the public realm, were all of high-quality, long-enduring materials and again we felt confident about their use but, once again, there remained that concern that their use be allowed to remain in place through the design development process.

Mr BARBER — Thank you for your time. Have you developed any particular speciality in heritage building refurbishments or have you ever supervised one yourself?

Prof. LONDON — In my role, back in Western Australia, I was involved with a number of key heritage buildings in the city — the old Treasury building was one that I spent a lot of time working on — and I have been involved in conducting workshops around a number of heritage buildings.

The comments that we offered dealt specifically with the design aspects of the building as offered by the proponents in terms of its redevelopment.

Mr BARBER — You did not have any particular dialogue with Heritage Victoria over that aspect of it?

Prof. LONDON — We were advised in Adrian Salmon’s letter that the heritage permit was being assessed by Heritage Victoria, and we thought it was best to leave those with that level of experience and expertise to make those judgements.
Mr BARBER — For this perforated box we are going to have on the corner, can you explain to me what the architectural merit is, above and beyond the public-realm aspects that you talked about before, important as they are?

Prof. LONDON — Unfortunately I do not have drawings in front of me so it is very difficult to draw attention to particular attributes. There is a pattern on the facade which makes use of larger and smaller sections of zinc and other materials; it will become, particularly at night when the small window openings to the rooms are illuminated, a quite vibrant, active facade; one that I think offers a lot more to the public than the very solid facade that we have at the moment.

It also had, if I recall properly, an animated rooftop. I think there is a gymnasium and a pool on the roof so the building would always appear as if it was in use, both on the ground level and on the roof level, and through hotel rooms that flank the two street corners.

Mr HALL — Thank you, Professor, for your submission to us this morning. Could you clarify a couple of things about the process? First of all, in reference to paragraph 24 in your submission, the invitation to the Hotel Windsor future plans breakfast, who issued that invitation to you?

Prof. LONDON — I never actually saw the invitation. It is attached here, it comes from Mr Perry, the chief executive officer and general manager, in the form of an email that was sent by Annette Maidment from the Hotel Windsor.

Mr HALL — That is not the actual invitation, that is the follow-up email?

Prof. LONDON — Sorry, that is the follow-up email, you are right. I never saw the invitation.

Mr HALL — Can I presume that the initial invitation would also have been sent perhaps by Mr Perry?

Prof. LONDON — You are asking me to speculate. I have not seen it so I cannot really give you a definite answer on that.

Mr HALL — Maybe you could take that on notice, if possible?

Prof. LONDON — I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr HALL — Then we could see who actually issued that initial invitation to you.

Prof. LONDON — Yes.

Mr HALL — In respect of that, am I right in therefore making the assumption that apart from the invitation to attend that meeting, and the follow-up email which is attachment A, and your meeting with the architects, that was the totality of your contact with the architects and developers of this project?

Prof. LONDON — That is the totality of the contact with the developers. Once I was contacted in my professional capacity from 24 July, yes.

Mr HALL — I then go to paragraph 20 where you mentioned that an informal, voluntary protocol had been developed between your office and the DPCD for projects. Can you give us a rough idea as to how many projects a year might you be consulted on; that informal protocol is exercised in respect to how many projects? Is it one or two?

Prof. LONDON — No, it would be more like five, six or seven — of that order.

Mr HALL — And you mentioned a couple by way of example in your submission?

Prof. LONDON — Yes.

Mr HALL — In respect to following through on that, your invitation from Adrian Salmon to provide some commentary therefore resulted in your meeting with the architects to get some further information to enable you to respond to DPCD as you have in appendix C in your submission.
Mr HALL — Again, are the documents in appendix C the totality of the advice that you gave to government on this project, either in writing or verbally?

Prof. LONDON — It is the totality of the written advice we gave and in addition to that, we had that meeting which is recorded here.

Mr HALL — Were there any minutes to that meeting.

Prof. LONDON — There were no minutes kept.

Mr VINEY — I really do not have any questions, thank you.

Mr KAVANAGH — Thank you, Professor. Since around the middle of last year when you were involved in the process, it seems now from reports that the government was under pressure from backbenchers not to go ahead with it or to delay it until after the election at least? Were you aware of that at all?

Prof. LONDON — I was not aware of that.

Mr KAVANAGH — You say in point 35:

Since the meeting with DPCD of 17 December 2009, I have not had any further contact with DPCD about the Windsor Hotel redevelopment.

Did you have any further contact with any government agency or department after 17 December?

Prof. LONDON — About the Winter Hotel redevelopment?

Mr KAVANAGH — Yes.

Prof. LONDON — To the best of my knowledge, no.

The CHAIR — Professor London, I just wanted to ask: you made a reference in your statement to being contacted about the Windsor Hotel in your professional capacity. You also use that phrase in your answer. Have you been contacted with respect to the Windsor development in any other capacity besides from your office as the Victorian government architect?

Prof. LONDON — What often happens is that projects are spoken about. There was some interest in this one earlier on. I was shown an early copy of plans by Garry Emery who was involved with the graphic design of the building. That would have been some months before. I cannot recollect the exact date. He was involved with the graphic design. As I understand it, he is no longer involved with it.

The CHAIR — Have you had any other contact in relation to that project outside the remit of what you put in this statement?

Prof. LONDON — No, that is it completely.

Mr GUY — Forgive my slight frustration. I am just keen to ascertain something: in answer to Mr Hall’s question you said this was the totality of the written advice that you had either sent, received or been in touch with the government about in relation to the project. Is that written advice or all advice that you had spoken to the government about in relation to the project?

Prof. LONDON — The only advice we have given to the government on this project has been to the Department of Planning and Community Development — it has been through the letter which is attachment C — and that meeting which is referred to in the statement.

Mr GUY — That is advice from yourself.

Mr VINEY — That is now answered twice. It is exactly the same answer twice to the same question.
Mr GUY — If you don’t mind: that is advice from yourself, but not advice in totality that you are aware of from your staff? When you say your ‘staff’, does that include the deputy architect or is it just your policy advisers? When you say your ‘staff’, I just want you to define what you say is your ‘staff’.

Prof. LONDON — I am happy to take the question you put to me earlier on notice and confirm to you that none of my staff, including my deputy, had contact.

Mr GUY — Outside of the letters you have tabled today?

Prof. LONDON — To government, yes.

Mr GUY — Yes?

Prof. LONDON — Yes, I am happy to do that.

Mr TEE — Second time!

Mr GUY — Are you a bit touchy about this subject, Mr Tee?

Mr VINEY — No, we are just wondering why you are questioning the answers.

Mr TEE — You are asking the same question time and again.

Mr GUY — I am just waiting. Clearly Mr Tee is precious on the subject. Was there anyone else at the meeting with Mr Hodge and Mr Salmon apart from yourself and your policy adviser or was it just the four people?

Prof. LONDON — I have a vague recollection there may have been someone else from the DPCD but I cannot state that with certainty so I have not included reference to that because of that fact.

Mr GUY — Would you be able to take that on notice and just ask your policy adviser if she might recollect the person there as well?

Prof. LONDON — I am happy to do that.

Mr GUY — I have no more questions.

The CHAIR — Professor, thank you for your evidence this morning and your written statement and attachments clarifying your involvement in this process. The committee certainly appreciates your attendance today and your evidence. We will have a draft version of the transcript to you in the next couple of days for any corrections you wish to make. Thank you for your time.

Witness withdrew.