



Ministry defends decision on tower

Greens, Akel have attacked government over Nicosia building

By Anna Savva

THE interior ministry on Tuesday defended government authorisation for a 10-storey building on Nicosia's Kinyras avenue as Akel and the Greens scolded the government, citing objections from experts.

The two opposition parties made statements following a report in *Phileleftheros* which said that the government had bypassed the municipality in approving the project next to a listed building housing the town planning authority.

For Akel, this action only confirms once again that the government's main concerns are neither residents' quality of life or the environment, but how to cater to a small group of friends and acquaintances and help them maximise their profits.

The proposed building had received the thumbs down from the town planning department, Nicosia Municipality, the committee on listed buildings, the antiquities department and the Technical Chamber ([Etek](#)).

The Greens also lambasted the plan, saying that the building would destroy the character of the area.

Municipal councillor Kyriakos Tsimillis voiced "extreme displeasure" at the decision. He said the party had from the beginning opposed this high building in a sensitive area and stressed that the uncontrolled construction of multi-storey buildings without a proper comprehensive plan was wrong and unacceptable.

The Greens would challenge the decision in a bid to reverse it, he added, and urged Nicosia Municipality to lodge an appeal against the government's decision and ask for its immediate revocation.

But the interior ministry denied claims it had acted outside of regulations, outlining how the approval had been granted.

The ministry cited Nicosia municipality's decision in 2016 to increase the availability of housing – specifically taller buildings to increase population density – in the city centre, as it overturned previous regulations. That decision saw the maximum number of floors to a building rise from three to eight, with provisions for buildings to reach 31 metres.

The ministry further stated that the application for the building in question initially received a warm reception from the municipality.

The building coefficient for the area was 100 per cent but this was doubled to 200 per cent as part of the Nicosia city centre plan, allowing twice the number of storeys without restrictions that apply on streets with traditional and listed buildings.

In that area, the plan and incentives allowed a project of eight floors however the town planning authority has the discretionary power to add another two. In this instance, the town planning authority which is Nicosia Municipality, rejected the application and the applicant filed an appeal which was examined by a ministerial committee which approved it.