

# City Management Plan workshop briefing notes

## The Design of New Development

### What are the issues?

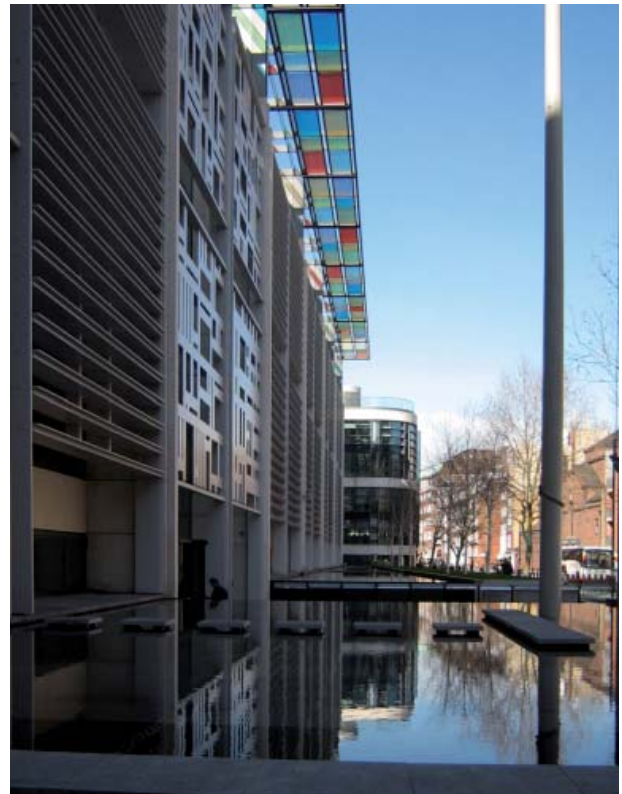
The design of new buildings and spaces is high on the national and local planning agenda. Central Government has stressed the need for high design quality and sustainability with the revised PPS 1, 'Delivering sustainable development'. This states:

Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning. Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people.

### Policy context

PPS3 (Housing), PPS 6 (Planning for Town Centres), PPS12 (Local Development frameworks) reiterate the need for high quality design. PPG15, Planning and the Historic Environment, deals with the preservation and enhancement of heritage assets such as conservation areas and listed buildings, through the design of new buildings and the protection of important historic buildings. PPG15 is likely to be replaced by a new PPS in the near future.

The London Plan policies 4B.1 and 4B.2 promote high quality, world class design. The plan states that 'Good design is rooted firmly in an understanding and appreciation of the local, social, historical



Home Office, Marsham Street (Terry Farrell and Partners)

and physical context, including urban form and movement patterns and historic character. It stresses that new development should show and understanding of, and respect for, existing character.

There are other important documents, such as CABE / English Heritage – Building in context: New Developments in Historic Areas (2002). This shows how high quality modern buildings can be intro-

duced into historic areas and enhance them. The City Council has sought high quality modern design for many years, whilst also seeking the retention of existing buildings which make positive contributions to conservation areas. Since 2000 the City Council has approved many new developments which are of high architectural quality and these have contributed to the rich architectural heritage of the city.

However, not all new development has reached the high standards the City Council seeks and in 2008 the City Council introduced a programme aimed at improving the quality of all new buildings, 'to raise the design bar', and to encourage buildings of world-class standard. The rejection of the mediocre development is supported by Central Government, which states in PPS1 that design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.

The aim is to achieve the goal of new buildings of exemplary design quality, whilst preserving and enhancing local distinctiveness. The question is how best to enshrine this in the local development framework, that is, through policies in the City Management Plan.

Any new design policy must recognise that there are very significant heritage assets which contribute to the local distinctiveness of the areas within the city and that it is essential that these should be respected. Failure to do so would put these assets at risk and undermine one of the principal aims of the Core Strategy.

Whilst sustainability matters, including energy use and generation, are integral to the design debate, because of the breadth of this subject area, a separate workshop will be held to deal with these issues.



215 Oxford Street (John McAslan and Partners) (left). BBC Phase 1 (MJP Architects) (middle). 15 Broadwick Street (Richard Rogers Partnership) (right).

## What have you told us?

- There is widespread support for policies which encourage high quality modern design.
- There is also support for conservation of the heritage assets of the city, including resisting the demolition of existing buildings which contribute positively to the character of the city.
- Sustainable and accessible development should be sought. New buildings should incorporate appropriate measures, such as living roofs and renewable energy sources.
- Height and density should be maximised, taking into account the character of the area.
- Policies which require preservation and enhancement should only relate to conservation areas.
- There is a concern that there are increasing planning requirements affecting the financial viability of development schemes, including the quality of design.
- Other concerns expressed relate to the conflict between the desire for high quality design and other planning requirements, such as off-street servicing.
- Some have stated that good buildings may become the listed buildings of the future and will stifle development opportunities.
- Public art has a significant role to play in the enhancement of the quality of the city.
- Revised policy is required from 'resisting demolition and re-building' to 'sustainability of retained and redeveloped buildings'.

## Current Unitary Development Plan 2007

The City Council's policies dealing with new buildings are set out in chapter 10 of the UDP 2007. The City Council's policies are longstanding and have served the city well. However, some policies, in particular those relating to sustainability matters, are not up to date with the revised London Plan.

STRA27 and DES 1 are general design policies that seek developments that have the highest standards of sustainable and inclusive design and respect the local context. DES 2 deals with large scale redevelopment and DES 4 deals with the design of smaller scale, infill development.

Other current Unitary Development Plan policies are also relevant to this topic area. These include:

- DES 7 – relating to public art, street furniture, lighting, walls, railings and paving.
- DES 9 – relating to development and demolition in conservation areas.
- DES 10– relating to development affecting listed buildings.
- DES 11– relating to development affecting archaeological heritage assets.
- RIV1, 2, 5, 7, 8 – relating to the design of riverside development, including piers and vessels, and the impact on views.
- The ENV policies – relating to environmental and sustainability matters.

The City Council would like the City Management Plan to cover all of these Unitary Development Plan design policy areas and so these can be referred to at the workshop sessions.



Reiss HQ, Barrett Street (Squire and Partners)



## Supplementary Planning Guidance

The City Council has also published supplementary planning guidance in the form of 'Demolition and Development in Conservation Areas' (1996) and 'Design Matters in Westminster' (2001). These explain and illustrate with examples of good practice how these policies should be interpreted and implemented. Also, the City Council's supplementary planning guidance 'Sustainable buildings' contains much useful information on the design of new sustainable development.

These documents may be up-dated in the near future as part of the LDF process.

## Core Strategy Publication Draft 2009 (subject to agreement)

### POLICY CS37 DESIGN

This policy deals with new development and states that it will be of exemplary standards of sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture. Imaginative modern architecture is encouraged provided that it respects Westminster's heritage and local distinctiveness and enriches its world class city environment.

Only the best, exemplary design, which respects and enhances the existing qualities and character of the city will be acceptable. Sustainable design, refurbishment and construction measures provide one of the most effective and efficient ways in which to reduce resource use, greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution.

## POLICY CS2 HERITAGE

This is a key policy in the Core Strategy and states that Westminster's heritage assets will be preserved and enhanced, including its listed buildings, conservation areas, the World Heritage Site, historic parks, squares, gardens and other open spaces, and its archaeological heritage. Any change should not detract from the existing qualities of the environment, which makes the city such an attractive and valued location for residents, businesses and visitors.

## Further information

- The London Plan- Consolidated with Alterations since 2004 (February 2008)
- Adopted Unitary Development Plan (January 2007)
- Core Strategy Publication Draft
- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development (January 2005)
- PPG15 Planning and the Historic Context (September 1994)
- PPG16 Archaeology and Planning (November 1990)
- Building in context CABE/English Heritage (2001)
- Demolition and Development in Conservation Areas Westminster City Council (1994)
- Design Matters in Westminster Westminster City Council (2001).

The agenda for the 'The Design of New Development' part of this workshop is as follows:

## Welcome and Introduction

to workshop by Councillor Robert Davis DL  
10mins

## What should we do?

### Encouraging high quality new design

1. How can we develop our policies to encourage greater architectural creativity, and raise the standard of all new design even higher? On the other hand, how can policy be strengthened to prevent merely 'acceptable' designs?

2. Should exceptional design quality ever be accepted as reason for not requiring normal planning benefits?

12 min

### Heritage and local distinctiveness

3. How best can we achieve the right balance between safeguarding heritage assets and integrating new development, protecting and adding to the local distinctiveness of the city?

4. Facadism and, in particular, pastiche design are often heavily criticised but what role can they play in preserving the character of parts of the city?

12 min

### Sustainability

5. Sustainability policies, dealing with such matters as the use of materials, on-site renewables, living roofs and so on, are included in the UDP but how can they be reinforced further through greater inte-

gration in the design policies?

6. Should a new policy seek to resist total demolition and redevelopment and encourage recladding and upgrading of existing buildings?

12 min

### Public art

7. How can the link between architecture and public art be strengthened and the quality of that public art improved?

6 mins

### Other issues

8. Are there any other issues that have not been covered above?

9. Are there issues that the Council should be aware of in its lobbying process?

12 mins

BREAK - 10mins

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