

<b>DESIGN CMP WORKSHOP</b>	
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2009, 7th Floor Meeting Room, Westminster City Hall	
Chairman: Councillor Robert Davis DL Facilitator: Lisa O'Donnell Officer Panel: Robert Ayton, Tom Burke, Lucy Davis, Jane Hamilton	
Councillor Robert Davis	Welcome and introduction
Lisa O'Donnell	
<b>The Design of New Development</b>	
<b>Encouraging high quality new design</b>	
<b>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?</b>	
Richard Perkins (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association)	Too often the architect designs and then the planner reduces quality. We need to think about allowing creative design that may seem to be contrary to planning, in terms of both built form and use. There are not many good architects operating in London.
Verina Glaessner (St Marylebone Society)	Has often studied plans. The problem is not the planners, but the demands on the architects in terms of standards, density etc
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Difficult to deal with designs set by the market that developers have to meet. Means you often get over development. For example Chelsea Barracks – became a massive proposed overdevelopment because so much was paid for the site. Has received many community objections over the scale of development. To achieve good design, need an understanding across the board, i.e. Councillors need to be adequately informed.
Lisa O'Donnell (facilitator)	Should there be a separation between design and functionality?
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Victoria Transport Interchange – no transport. Amount of public open space very poor. Westminster City Council didn't take account of English Heritage and CABE. Selbourne House – proposals are right up to the property boundary. Quality minimised because of the need to maximise development and intrudes onto views of St James's Park.
Barnaby Collins (DP9)	How measure the quality of 'good design?' How raise standards? How quantify good design? How move beyond 'good' design?
Julian Robinson (London School of Economics)	In assessing planning applications recognition is needed of the client's process and aspirations – i.e. if held design competition. Facadism should be avoided. Need some sort of peer review.
Guy Bransbury (Jones Lang LaSalle)	Design Matters SPG – needs to be reviewed to help improve design standards.
Lisa O'Donnell (facilitator)	How quantify design quality?
Hugh Bullock	Depends upon what is meant by 'design'? Not just about

(Westminster Property Association)	appearance. Need to separate functionality from architecture and sustainability, which all form part of good design.
Councillor Angela Hooper	I used to be Cabinet Member for Planning. We produced a planning brief for the Chelsea Barracks site. The architects didn't respond to this brief. Regarding the issue of size and getting the maximum from the site – The 'three sisters' site on Horseferry Road was replaced with a building (Home Office) that was lower in height, better designed, but with greater floorspace. Issue is therefore not just about overdevelopment.
<b>2. Should exceptional design quality ever be accepted as reason for not requiring normal planning benefits? – for example should public art be relaxed?</b>	
Neil Thompson (Great Portland Estate)	Exemplary design costs money. Need some form of relaxation – developers cannot provide for everything (i.e. public art/public realm).
Lisa O'Donnell (facilitator)	Should there be a difference between what is required on sites with a high existing use value compared with sites with low existing use value.
Neil Thompson (Great Portland Estate)	Relaxation should be applied across the board. Over 70% of Westminster is conservation area – therefore need developers to be providing good development.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Every building should be of exceptional quality. Seems strange that can then be relaxing other policy requirements/benefits. Example of the Shard skyscraper in Southwark which overrode other planning considerations because it was deemed to be of exceptional design quality. Don't agree with this. We need to define what is meant by good design.
Lisa O'Donnell (facilitator)	We are interested in your views of what constitutes good design?
Richard Perkins (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association)	No such thing as optimum good design – it doesn't exist.
Blythe Dunk (Jones Lang LaSalle)	The Council should set up a Design Panel. The Contemporary Design document could also be regularly reviewed.
Guy Bransbury (Jones Lang LaSalle)	Good design should override other benefits such as green roofs and other sustainable features.
<b>Heritage and local distinctiveness</b>	
<b>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.</b>	
Paul Velluet (HOK International Architects)	Need consistency of language between Unitary Development Plan, sub policies in guidance, and interpretation of these policies by officers. Can often be quite divergent. For example the Westbourne Conservation Area Audit – nearly every building was of merit.
Unknown	Seems to be a general view that buildings are just seen as 'trophies'. Should be more about the use of buildings, and the pleasure they can people who use them. Greater consideration should be given to newer, younger architects who work on a smaller scale.

Julian Robinson (London School of Economics)	Problem with non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas. What is a heritage asset? Some non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas are old, but could easily be replaced.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Need greater understanding of the details, which often escape the planning officers. Example of new dormer windows in a street of dormer windows – why not compare with what is already there and ensure that new dormer windows match? Example in Pimlico of poor balustrades/balconies – why can't planning officers suggest that these are replaced with new balustrades as part of the development?
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	Negotiation takes up a good deal of my time – though may not be consistently applied.
Richard Perkins (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association)	There should be a design guide for a street for developers to conform with, which could speed up the development process.
Anne Mallinson (Age Concern/Westminster Senior Citizen's Forum)	Mirror and glass developments make people ill.
<b>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?</b>	
Hugh Bullock (Westminster Property Association)	A case can be made for taking that approach. For example, along Regent's Street the facades will remain, but functionality of the buildings is poor. Therefore an issue of functionality. Also worth recognising that views of what constitutes good design change over time.
Councillor Robert Davis DL	One quality of the LDF is that policy can be changed relatively easily.
<b>Sustainability</b>	
<b>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 integration in the design policies.</b>	
Paul Velluet (HOK International Architects)	Needs to greater recognition of performance of historic buildings. UDP policies are currently devoid of performance measuring. Need a clear statement in terms of listed buildings and historic buildings. Wording matters if policy will be applied in a rigid way. Conservation of buildings needs to understand the performance of buildings. Await to see what's in the new PPS (to replace PPG 15 Planning and Historic Environment?)
<b>6. Should a new policy seek to resist total demolition and redevelopment and encourage recladding and upgrading of existing buildings?</b>	
Barnaby Collins (DP9)	This is too simplistic a question. For example new development can be effective especially if it reuses materials from the existing building, and has efficient on-going energy performance, which can override costs of demolition.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Some buildings are worth retaining, for example because of its connections to the community.
Guy Bransbury (Jones Lang LaSalle)	Existing regulations and PPG15 are sufficient.
<b>Public Art</b>	

<b>Q7. How can the link between architecture and public art be strengthened and the quality of that public art improved?</b>	
Councillor Gwyneth Hampson	Current sits on the public art panel. Architects should be brought into the process earlier, to ensure that public art is not an 'add-on' or a 'canopy'.
Councillor Angela Hooper	Currently the Chair of the Public Art Panel. Example given of the canopy was a poor effort by the developers/architects. A doorway is not public art! People don't recognise that there is only a limited amount of money for public art, not a pot of gold. Would reiterate that public art should not be viewed as an 'add on'.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	The notion of public art is misplaced. There should be a public art fund rather than little money for each installation.
Councillor Angela Hooper	We are restricted by government legislation. Important that there is a discussion between the architect and the artist.
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	There is a public art project about to take place in Marylebone, where an electricity sub-station is to be hidden by public art. Was a missed opportunity for a good piece of industrial architecture. The public art seemed to be applied afterwards rather than as part of the development.
Robert Ayton (Planning Officer)	Legal issues impact upon public art. We don't currently pool money – there can be difficulties in how the money would be allocated.
Simon Loomes (Portman Estate)	Rather than pooling, the City Council need to encourage developers to utilise a public art 'credit' system.
Paul Williams (Derwent London)	Difficult issue to resolve. Should pool resources to create really good art public art.
Councillor Angela Hooper	The City Council made representations to the Government some six years ago.
Unknown	There are tariff systems in other boroughs which seem to work quite well.
<b>Q8. Are there any other issues?</b>	
Councillor ??? (minority party member)	Seems to be resistance to integrating sustainability into development. Also, there are VAT discrepancies between demolition and retention.
Paul Williams (Derwent London)	Keen to make sure that buildings work, for example also ensuring that there are openable windows. There can be limitations on re-organising existing buildings which can fetter development, especially when other policy considerations are considered. Need for encouragement rather than taxation.
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	There are so many rules and regulations that it puts undue pressure on architects to get the planning application validated. Can often go into design too soon.
Neil Thompson (Portland Estates)	Lots of people commend the City Council for looking at the issue of design. Should definitely be an iterative and collaborative process. The Council should be prepared to put time and effort into ensuring this happens.
Adrian Penfold (British Land)	Could have a 'backwards' design review panel which could debate design issues at a generic level rather than site specific level.

Terence M?	Should have a forum for young architects to present what they have done. The City Council could do this through 'London Architecture', and could assess designs that worked, and other designs that could be improved.
Brian Miller (Victoria Interchange Group)	High quality design encompasses lots of things, including how it is built. There needs to be a greater understanding at design stage of how to build with minimum disruption.
<b>Views and Tall Buildings</b>	
Councillor Robert Davis	Introduction
<b>Views</b>	
<b>1. Which views in Westminster do you consider to be most significant and why?</b>	
Lisa O'Donnell (facilitator)	Are there any views in Westminster that are not properly protected?
Councillor ?Keen?	Views in and out of Regents Park and Hyde Park should be better protected.
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	Need for consideration of both the winter and summer view. Parks look very different in the winter without trees in leaf.
Jane Hamilton (Planning Officer)	In addition to the Mayor's strategic views, we can also protect views as part of Conservation Area Audits.
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	There are also currently policies for parks and squares which protect views.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Should add St James's Park to the list of views which need protecting. Agree that views look different in summer and winter. There have been approvals that have affected St James's Park. Which Mayor of London is being referred to?
Jane Hamilton (Planning Officer)	The New Mayor is currently consulting on new London View Management Framework.
<b>2. How can we assess what is important about a view? Which elements within views should policy seek</b>	
Lisa O'Donnell	There are three categories of view – strategic, local views of metropolitan importance, and local views.
Rob Ayton (Planning Officer)	Explanation of the view hierarchy. Strategic views – long distance views of Palace of Westminster; Metropolitan views – important views that tourists /residents recognise as symbolic of London; Local views – important to the local area but not widely known. Mayor of London currently consulting on 26 views in London View Management Framework.
Barnaby Collins (DP9)	'Postcode views' often include views of Gherkin and the London Eye – views of new buildings and structures are equally important. Built heritage of the future.
Blythe Dunk (Jones Lang LaSalle)	Live and work in London, and want to see (protected) views of buildings.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Bound by the current London Plan, and widening framework of views set out in the London View Management Framework. Assuming Boris Johnson's views will become the London Plan, to what extent can use views to prevent tall buildings?
Lisa O'Donnell	New London Plan and City Management Plan Document will both take time to develop. The City Council will have an opportunity to make a case regarding the development of the London Plan.

Hugh Bullock (Westminster Property Association)	Difficulties in deciding what makes a good view. What evidence is there to support the protection of a view? Also difficult to apply to views which also fall outside the boundary of Westminster
<b>Tall Buildings</b>	
<b>Q4. What makes a good tall building? What criteria should we use to assess proposals for tall buildings?</b>	
Councillor Gwyneth Hampson	Tall buildings tend to have a lot of glass and tend to be offices. You often see furniture, desks, shopping bags etc which can be unsightly. Need something in design policy to disguise this.
Barnaby Collins (DP9)	Plenty of criteria exists already. No more need to do, other than to adopt this criteria – i.e. CABE.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	What defines a good tall building? Being able to see it and the space around it? I prefer isolated tall buildings rather than those grouped together.
Julian Robinson (London School of Economics)	Prefer a cluster. The problem with tall buildings is when they are isolated. The Shard in London Bridge is an example of a well designed tall building that is in the wrong place.
Unknown	Sustainability – air conditioning plant in tall buildings.
<b>Q5. How can policy respond to proposals for tall buildings outside the borough but which may be visible in key views, such as those of the World Heritage Site?</b>	
John East (Savills)	Need a degree of flexibility. The real danger is what you actually see and the policy approach. For example, from St James's Park the eye actually sees the wheel (London Eye) – tall buildings can respond to the wheel and not dominate. Need to be careful – the reason there is a GLA is for strategic issues. Need greater dialogue with adjoining boroughs.
Councillor Keen?	Views along Thames have been ruined by development – eg St George's development in Lambeth. Would continue to support borough objecting to views outside Westminster.
Lisa O'Donnell	<b>Additional question: Where are tall buildings appropriate in Westminster? Where are they not appropriate?</b>
Simon Loomes (Portman Estate)	Have got to take account of transport interchanges.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Victoria Street – should be kept to a reasonable height. Victoria Transport Interchange – proposals for 40 storey tower – no respect for this part of Westminster.
<b>Signs and advertising</b>	
<b>Q6. Should policy control the impact of other types of development as well as signs and advertisements on sensitive locations and significant views?</b>	
Rob Ayton (Planning Officer)	Provided clarification that other types could include shrouds and 'wraparound' advertising.
Unknown	Should not be on residential developments
Hugh Bullock (Westminster Property Association)	Depends upon 'what?' and 'where?' Some advertising can look quite artistic. Piccadilly Circus example. Technology of advertising is evolving, and can be quite positive.
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Should be a presumption against advertising. Advertising can be everywhere – even stuck on the floor at Victoria Station! What kind of environment are we creating?
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	(not speaking on behalf of Marylebone Association) love advertising!

Councillor Susie Burbridge	Shrouding should not be up for two years if the work only takes 2 months.
<b>Extensions and Alterations</b>	
<b><i>Q1. Should we maintain the longstanding, design criteria that are present in our existing policies? Or are the current policies too prescriptive?</i></b>	
Richard Perkins (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association)	Why need consent to prune tree in backgarden? We're too strict on the backs of buildings.
Paul...	Policies are unduly prescriptive. A creative approach can generate design which is different to existing. Matter of interpretation. Should always have to match. Need to look at policy wording. New design could generate a more creative approach.
John East (Savills)	More prescriptive policies than other boroughs and more prescriptively applied, which can stifle creativity.
Unknown	Concern over developing over gardens. Problems with water run off. Gardens should be retained where possible.
	Creativity is vital. Echo first two comments. Policy doesn't encourage contemporary design.
Councillor Gwyneth Hampson	Under garden extensions are bane of my life! The main problem can't resolve is disruption to neighbours, especially in St John's Wood.
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	Underground under excavation under footprint of house is permitted development. We can only intervene if beyond permitted development.
Richard Perkins (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association)	Planning system is not helpful. Problem exists and is getting worse.
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	There is other legislation eg environmental legislation which can be enforced.
Richard Perkins (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association)	Need some joined up thinking. Why aren't colleagues from other departments here?
Robert Morris (Knightsbridge Association)	Understand Camden have produced guidance and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are proposing to produce guidance. Why aren't Westminster?
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	Have produced supplementary planning guidance. Looking at producing...
Lisa O'Donnell	There are elements that we do and don't have control over. Planning policy can only do so much.
Robert Morris (Knightsbridge Association)	Main problem is development over gardens. Issues of lighting, and water problems. Guidance is required.
Unknown	How justify retrospective planning applications?
Councillor Robert Davis	Have to assess it as if it has not been developed, as set out by law.

Councillor Angela Hooper	Issue of enforcement. Also, why do people buy a 2 bed house when they want a 6 bed house? Impact on open space.
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	Underground development – doesn't always have windows and often needs air conditioning etc. Can the Council use these as grounds to control subterranean development. With garden development, can the City Council use the sustainability angle to refuse?
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	Quite right. If issue is in relation to gardens or loss of trees then this can be taken into account.
Councillor XXXX	Tendency to go for permission rather than not. Also need link between planning application and noise.
Lisa O'Donnell	Core Strategy document has greater linkages.
Tom Burke (Planning Officer)	Conditions can be applied that restrict for example, noise of plant.
Councillor XXXX	I've never seen a noise condition
Nigel Hughes (Grosvenor)	We welcome Kensington and Chelsea Supplementary Planning Document on subterranean developments.
<b>Q2. What should our approach be towards underground extensions? Where these are not permitted development should we take a firmer approach to resisting such proposals under gardens and listed buildings?</b>	
<b>Q3. Should we be more flexible in allowing renewable energy technology and equipment at the rear of buildings, e.g. solar panels and photovoltaics?</b>	
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	When a mansard roof is permitted, should incorporate renewable energy and be of good modern design. Solar panels/insulation, especially if not seen from street level.
Paul Velluet	Depends upon how it's done. St James's Church, Piccadilly – much 'vaunted' but disappointing and poorly executed. Quality/design solution not good.
<b>Q4. Should we instead concentrate on encouraging a reduction in the demand for energy within buildings, particularly in relation to buildings of historic interest?</b>	
Councillor Louise Hyams	We should concentrate on reducing energy. Openable windows and blinds rather than air conditioning.
Unknown	Air conditioning is controlled under building regulations. The only way you can cool is through air conditioning in certain circumstances, rather than a blanket ban.
Michael Jones	Westminster City Council need to educate. Lots of conflicting advice. Should not be knee-jerk tokenism.
<b>Q5. Should we require more living roofs on existing buildings and new extensions?</b>	
John East (Savills)	Too prescriptive, better to be encouraged. Goes back to what makes good design. Also issue of maintenance in terms of living walls, therefore need to be careful. Not just about 'green roofs'.
Gaby Higgs (Marylebone Society)	Roof terraces seem to be refused. In a dense city a roof terrace can be a garden – i.e. growing vegetables. Shouldn't just be dismissed on amenity grounds.
Anne Mallinson (Age Concern/Westminster Senior Citizen's Forum)	Neighbours privacy has to be taken into account.

Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	All developments – green roofs should be encouraged. Not about ‘sitting on’ but also for natural life – bees, butterflies, to encourage sustainability.
Lisa O’Donnell	Issue over the function of a roof? Leisure versus Biodiversity?
Tom Ball (Thorney Island Society)	Piccadilly – someone has a beehive on the roof!
Councillor Angela Hooper	In New York – sporting facilities are made available on roofs, and could be considered in Westminster.
<b>Q6. Should we have a presumption against the installation of external mechanical plant on sustainability grounds except where it a) generates energy or b) can be demonstrated to be necessary for the reasonable use of the building?</b>	
Anne Mallinson (Age Concern/Westminster Senior Citizen’s Forum)	Extractor fans from kitchens. Need to be more efficient and quieter.
<b>Q7. Are there any other issues that have not been covered above?</b>	
Councillor Keen	Boilers require ongoing assessment. Why can’t have controls on ventilation and extraction? – produce a certificate. May need legislation.
Simon Loomes	Evolving situation. Need to avoid tokenism/what is fashionable (green roofs/photovoltaics). Need to assess what they actually contribute?
<b>Q8. Are there issues that the Council should be aware of in its lobbying process?</b>	