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### **CAMBRIDGE CITY DESIGN AND CONSERVATION PANEL**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CONSTITUTION**

**Approved November 2006**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE PANEL**

The Panel exists to support the City Council in delivering the Government and the Council's design and conservation objectives (PPS 1, PPG15, and Cambridge Local Plan chapters 3 and 4) to secure the highest possible design quality of buildings and spaces, and to preserve and enhance the historic environment.

The Panel has 3 specific roles:

- a) to provide a forum for pre-application presentation of, briefing for, and expert advice on, major or otherwise significant development proposals;
- b) to provide formal comments on submitted applications;
- c) to contribute to Conservation Area Designations and Appraisals, and the development of other policies and guidance related to Design and Conservation.

#### **2. MAKE UP OF THE PANEL**

The Panel will be made up of 4-6 persons at meetings, from a pool of 10-20. They will comprise individuals with skills in architecture, planning, urban design, landscape design, and the historic environment. The following skills are also desirable: sustainability and environmental services, inclusive environments, and public art (as per "How to do design review - creating and running a successful panel", <http://www.cabe.org.uk/AssetLibrary/8641.pdf>).

The following bodies will be invited to nominate one or more members:-

- the Royal Institute of British Architects
- the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- the Royal Town Planning Institute
- the Institute of Historic Building Conservation
- the Landscape Institute
- the Cambridge Preservation Society
- English Heritage
- University of Cambridge School of Architecture
- Shape East

Other members will be co-opted by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport on the basis of their relevant skills and knowledge, in order to ensure a sufficient pool of expertise.

The City Council's Design and Historic Environment Champions may attend ex officio. Other Council Members are entitled to attend Panel meetings.

Sub committees may be set up to consider applications of particular specialist interest,

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for example a sub group may be required to consider matters related to master plans submitted as part of large scale urban extensions or for changes affecting a conservation area. Where relevant, specialist groups may be invited to Panel, or to give advice prior to a meeting.

Panel members are required to send their apologies to the Chairperson or Historic Environment Manager when they are unable or do not wish to attend. Panel members unable to attend, but wishing to make comments on an item should submit brief notes at least 1 day in advance.

### **3. CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

The chairman and vice-chairman will be appointed, by invitation, on behalf of the City Council by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport. The term of chairmanship will normally be for 2 years.

### **4 THE MEETINGS**

The City Council will arrange the Panel meetings, which will normally be every four weeks, and held at the Guildhall. Meetings will be scheduled one year in advance; dates will be changed only in exceptional circumstances. Additional meetings, and meetings on site may also be arranged as necessary.

The meeting dates will be set to allow for comments to be submitted to the case officer in good time to be included in the main report to the following Planning Committee meeting.

Agendas will normally be produced by the City Council, in agreement with the chairman where necessary, and will be circulated by email. Agendas will identify the timing for discussions, the proposals and the key issues to be considered at each meeting. Panel Members may request that applications are brought before them, and any reasonable requests will be met.

The draft minutes will be produced by Council officers and approved by the chairperson (or vice-chairperson in their absence) before being circulated to other members. A vote to approve the minutes will be taken at the subsequent meeting.

At least three members must be in attendance before the panel may have a quorum. Any decisions made when there are fewer than three members present will be subject to ratification at the next meeting.

### **5 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The Panel will normally be asked to comment on the following:

- Major new developments/urban extensions
- Statutory development briefs/design guidance
- Single buildings of architectural or other significance

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- Any building or site considered to require special consideration
- Significant Listed Building Consent applications involving additions, or other major works to Grade II listed buildings not otherwise referred to statutory consultees (English Heritage and / or the “6 Societies”).
- Significant demolition and /or construction proposals in Conservation Areas
- Proposals for the listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest
- Designation, boundary review, and Appraisals of Conservation Areas
- Proposals affecting Designated Historic Parks and Gardens
- Public Art strategies

The Panel may also be asked to comment on other applications at the discretion of the Director of Environment and Planning.

## **6. DECISION MAKING**

Panel members should consider proposals on the basis of sound design principles and policy guidance. They should identify, with detailed critical observations, the positive and negative features of schemes. Panel members will be provided with guidance on the relevant planning policies.

Where feasible, the Panel are encouraged to reach a consensus view (as suggested by CABE) in terms of :

“green light: a good scheme, or one which is acceptable subject to minor improvements;

amber light: in need of significant improvements to make it acceptable, but not a matter of starting from scratch;

red light: the scheme is fundamentally flawed and a fresh start is needed”

Panel views shall be expressed to the Planning Committee without using jargon or complex terms, and should be clear and to the point. If Panel members are unable to agree, the advice should clearly reflect the basis of the disagreement and the issues involved.

## **7. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Panel members should declare interests on the same basis as members do at Planning Committee.

## **8. PRESENTATIONS**

The City Council may ask the architect/agent of complex schemes to present these to the Panel. In such cases, the presentation should not normally last for more than twenty minutes, with the site visit to precede discussions. The architect will then answer any questions and be asked to leave the meeting before discussion on the merit of the scheme takes place.

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### **9 REPORTING OF DECISIONS**

The City Council officers will report the Panel's advice to the relevant case officer, who will in turn ensure that Panel's comments feature in any relevant committee report.

The Panel chair, or a representative where appropriate, may be invited to attend the City's Planning Committee to inform the Committee of the Panel's discussions in relation to applications considered.

Feedback on the outcome of planning decisions will be given to Panel members. The Council will arrange an annual day of site visits, to enable Panel members to review outcomes of applications considered.