

Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment

Landscape Institute response

19 July 2013

Section 1: Understanding the role for Government in promoting design quality in architecture and the built environment

1. 1 Britain has some of the best architects and designers in the world but that does not automatically mean that standards of architectural design in England are as good as they could be. Why is this?

The success of the Olympic Park as it approaches the first anniversary of its opening is a timely example of why any review of architecture and the built environment needs to go beyond an analysis of the design of buildings. The creation of this new part of East London has demonstrated the success of landscape architecture, master planning, landscape engineering, urban design and horticulture. The legacy and the massively increased value created by the site is testament to the power of a well-designed landscape in which the management of water, ecology and architecture have combined to create a superb new part of the city.

The main lesson from the Olympics, we believe, is that the best results for local communities, developers, and cities as a whole are achieved when a concerted, cross-professional effort is made to create a liveable environment, with long-term legacy uppermost in everyone's mind. We urge the Farrell review to consider the designed environment as a whole, with a focus on creating liveable cities. This is the way forward for all of the built environment professions, and unless we all think in these terms, none of us can deliver what society needs.

Since the review conducted by Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force¹ fifteen years ago, there has been a significant increase in the understanding of the pressures faced by cities and of our relationship with the natural and ecological forces that influence the structure and working of our built environment. These include rapidly expanding urban populations, scarce resources, environmental and economic challenges, the evolution of SMART cities, sustaining biodiversity, green infrastructure², the rise of the biophilic cities movement and the development of water sensitive urban design. Despite these many key challenges and exciting developments, the questions in the Farrell Review are not framed to allow for a consideration of the many lessons being learned across the globe on what makes a liveable city work.

¹ http://www.urbantaskforce.org/UTF_final_report.pdf

² <http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/PDF/Contribute/2013GreenInfrastructureLIPositionStatement.pdf>

The Landscape Institute believes that this Review will set the terms of future debate about our designed environments for some time, both within government and beyond. For this reason, we want to ensure that it clearly sets out the main strategic challenges, so that it stimulates a productive and forward-looking debate. For us the headline societal issue is 'liveable cities', and the underlying challenge for the built environment professions is to integrate into our respective professional practice a much better understanding of how landscape and natural systems interact with built form.

The Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, introduced the Farrell Review by saying

“Good design builds communities, creates quality of life, and makes places better for people to live, work and play in. I want to make sure we’re doing all we can to recognise the importance of architecture and reap the benefits of good design and I’m delighted Sir Terry Farrell has agreed to undertake this independent review.”

The first part of this statement is to be commended, and through explicit reference in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to the importance of good design, this government has taken some steps to integrating good design into its broader policy framework. Nevertheless this Review is an appropriate point to record that many of the government’s recent decisions have damaged the prospects of reaping the benefits of good design in our built environment.

The closure of CABE and CABE Space was a major decision that will have a negative impact on design quality. As the Government’s advisor on architecture, urban design and public spaces, CABE played an important role in raising design quality through its research, advocacy, enabling and advice. As a non-statutory consultee on schemes at the pre-application and planning application stages for local authorities, its expert input was significant in raising standards.

The removal of the requirement by local authorities for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) in the validation of planning applications will have a negative impact on design quality. This is because design quality is dependent on the ways in which development works within a wider context. LVIA is essential in ensuring that any development is evaluated by the impact that it makes upon the surrounding landscape. The lack of support for LVIA is indicative of an approach to the built environment almost entirely determined by the ‘red-line boundary’, within which developers and architects consider the development envelope in isolation and do not pay adequate attention to the wider context.

Recent proposals to raise the threshold for developments requiring Design and Access Statements (DAS) will have a negative impact on design quality. This undermines the commitment to design quality enshrined in the NPPF and should be abandoned. The requirement to submit a DAS ensures that applicants give due consideration to the design aspects of their proposal before submission. The preparation of a DAS can be of substantial value to the applicant/developer, by providing an opportunity for some rigorous evaluation of design options and choices which should inform all types and scales of development.

There is now a worrying lack of design expertise (exacerbated by recent cuts in local authority funding) in development management departments of local planning authorities. This cannot have anything other than a negative impact on standards of design as there are few officers with the experience and knowledge to offer design guidance to committee members.

The perception by some developers that good design is more expensive than bad design and does not deliver value for money is out of date but very unhelpful. To address this, there needs to be strong leadership at central Government level to support good design. This is not an argument for greater regulation but a request for a committed design champion dedicated to raising quality in our built environment. The policies of a significant number of Government departments have an impact on both the aesthetic and functional qualities of our built environment, so this role should be one that operates across departmental boundaries.

As part of the Construction 2025 strategy the government has made a commitment to work towards full life costings on all new construction projects. We very much welcome this as we believe that in many cases the normal approach of seeking the lowest capital cost is often not the best way of securing long-term best value or optimum sustainability. A rapid move towards full life costing will serve as an important driver in bringing forward design solutions which promote liveability and sustainability.

1.2 How can the 'everyday' quality of our housing, public spaces and buildings be significantly improved?

One good way would be to connect thinking about good design at the highest level with thinking about the future of the construction sector. The government has just published its strategy for the sector, Construction 2025³, which contains an opening statement to the effect that Britain has world-class expertise in architecture, design and engineering. Thereafter it appears to regard our leadership in design to be so self-evident as to require little further comment. Within the document references to design are almost all about the use of digital design tools and design for manufacture and assembly in the construction process. The only reference to quality design in the finished product of the construction process comes in a quote from Terry Farrell himself. This report is a result of collaboration between government and the leaders of the construction sector, so this suggests that neither the government nor the sector itself has any significant regard for design quality as something to be aspired to or built upon. The strategy is primarily concerned with process - pushing down costs, speeding up construction, and integrating new technology. The strategy correctly says:

'Construction supply chains are diverse and complex, containing many SMEs. They start with the briefing and design process and work all the way through to manufacturing and the primary extraction of minerals and resources. The biggest challenge for the industry is how to bring together these value adding activities consistently, and in a way which ensures the whole is more than the sum of the parts.' (p. 54).

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/construction-2025-strategy>

Thereafter it says little about how to improve the briefing and design end of the spectrum outside of the need to improve energy performance, and focuses entirely on framework agreement and financial models. If we have a construction strategy which sees the future primarily in terms of driving down costs and speeding up process rather than in delivering places and buildings which people will want to live, work and relax in, it cannot be surprising that 'everyday' quality is not very impressive.

We believe that the views of Nick Boles MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning, are right – that if local people see good design they will be more inclined to accept new development. Many people resist developments because they feel the quality of new housing, in particular, is low, and will detract from the quality of their local environment.

Market mechanisms alone are not sufficient to drive up quality in the housing sector. In the case of product manufacture, competing firms offer customers enhanced aesthetic value and increasing utility to give them a competitive edge. It is inconceivable that there could ever be such an abundant supply of housing options available on the market that a similar dynamic could come into effect. In the meantime, although the number of new housing starts is at a record low, the profitability of housebuilding firms remains persistently high. From a commercial perspective it makes better sense to build a small number of units for maximum profitability rather than to build large volumes of well-designed but less profitable homes. Only a mechanism external to the market can have any impact on this.

There is an important role here for Design Review, and we believe the excellent work of CABA and CABA Space should be continued. Planning authorities across the country need to develop skills and understanding in assessing the design of development proposals, and there is a role for the Design Council in providing the necessary training and guidance. There is a massive task ahead of us to raise awareness of design value so that each planning authority can make well-informed decisions which promote good design. Only with this investment in human resource can the Planning Minister's vision be realised.

1.3 Would having a formal architecture policy (as some European countries do) help to achieve improved outcomes? What might be the potential aims of such a policy? What might the benefits be and how could they be measured?

An architecture policy is not required.

Chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already establishes a clear commitment to the quality of design in the built environment. Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that:

“The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”

How the aims and objectives contained within the NPPF are translated into reality is a challenge. We understand that the Government is intending to make Planning Practice Guidance available online (following the Taylor Review) in the summer of 2013. This

Guidance will be critical in ensuring that aspirations are realised. We also understand that this Guidance will not be subject to the official consultation process, a decision that will, for the sake of speed, undoubtedly result in Guidance that is less well-drafted and well-informed as it will not have been scrutinised by the wide range of interests with expertise in the fields of planning, design, landscape and the built environment.

We believe that good decision-making surrounding the ways in which all landscapes are planned, designed and managed is critical to achieving a built environment that is fit for the future. The European Landscape Convention (ELC), 2000, of which the UK Government is a signatory already commits the UK Government to a range of measures which seek to improve landscape quality. Specifically, Article 5 of the ELC requires signatory states to:

- Recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
- Establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning;
- Establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies; and
- Integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.

The ELC covers landscape in all of its settings; urban, rural, suburban and peri-urban. Policy support clearly already exists to improve design quality. The ELC, if embedded in policy at a national and local level, would go a long way towards achieving what should be the desired objective of a more liveable built environment. Currently this policy framework is not being translated into action on the ground and there does not appear to be a strong enough commitment to overcome this gulf between policy and reality.

One of the benefits of deploying the ELC more proactively is that it provides an excellent framework for taking forward the liveability agenda. It offers a human-centred approach to landscape, and takes account of all of the different considerations which need to be balanced in considering how far an area should be developed, and what kind of development would be best suited to each context.

1.4 What can local and national bodies do to promote design quality? What policy infrastructure would assist them in this important task?

The policy context within which decisions are made relating to the planning, design and management of our built environment are wide-ranging. However there are some measures which could assist in raising design quality in the built environment:

- Include robust design policies in Local Plans - to be used to reject poorly-designed schemes;
- Make Green Infrastructure a subject of supplementary planning documents to add further detail to local plans. Many local authorities are already doing this, which will go some way to ensuring that land use is optimised and the natural environment is able to contribute towards the creation of liveable towns and cities;
- Ensure that local authorities follow the recommendation of the NPPF and use the Design Review process. No project is too small to go to a Design Review panel. The value of this process has been encapsulated in the most recent edition of the joint Design Council CABE, Landscape Institute, RIBA, RTPI publication *Design Review: Principles and Practice* (2013);
- Use elected members of local authorities as design champions, perhaps within relevant committees, such as those responsible for planning, environment, development management, and regeneration;
- Reinstate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as part of the validation of planning application process at the local authority level (see response to 1.1); and
- Greater responsibility on Local Enterprise Partnerships to recognise the value of good design in promoting sustainable economic growth.

For major infrastructure projects, National Policy Statements (NPSs) make clear the relationship between LVIA and design of a building or place. Negative impact can be mitigated by the design. The process needs to be embedded in the evolution of the design, not tacked on at a later date. NPSs have design policies and requirements for LVIA set out within them. Government must expedite the outstanding NPSs, particularly on the subject of linear routes (road and rail), especially if there is to be major investment in this form of infrastructure. This NPS should set out design requirements and commitments to LVIA as part of the process, as in the existing NPSs.

1.5 What other recommendations would you like to make relating to this particular theme?

Underpinning concerns about design quality there must be a deeper set of questions about how we want to function as a society in future and what kind of world we want to live in. It is this broad societal agenda which we refer to as 'liveability', and which brings together considerations of functional use, adaptability, enjoyment, integration of the historic and modern built environment, and the relationship between grey and green infrastructure. 'Design quality' must be the embodiment of those considerations as they come to bear on a particular development in its landscape context. If design quality is not about this, and understood by the public to be about this, it will continue to be perceived by the public as a form of rather rarefied connoisseurship, understandable only by eminent architects, and having little to do with the day to day concerns of the people who will be living within or

alongside a development for a very long time. For example, the UK has a rapidly ageing population and for this reason, designing places, spaces, environments and buildings which older people can use and enjoy will be an increasingly important element in our considerations of design quality. The notion that something could be of generally good quality but unfortunately not properly usable or enjoyable by older people for reasons of scale, accessibility or perceived relevance seems nonsensical. In a society increasingly succumbing to obesity and inactivity, good design must likewise embrace some consideration of encouraging more active lifestyles. Unfortunately a lot of the discourse about design quality in the built environment tends to regard built form as a kind of sculpture rather than as a 'machine for living'.

Section 2: The economic benefits of architecture and design, and maximising the UK's growth potential.

2.1 In what ways does architecture and built environment design contribute to the UK economy?

The built environment creates the physical and social fabric of economic growth and is therefore fundamental to the UK economy both in terms of the direct jobs in related professions and the jobs created in the construction and use of buildings and public space. The provision of new homes, offices, factories and schools is reliant upon architecture and built environment design. However the full value of its contribution can only be realised when combined with good landscape architecture, planning and environmental design. Poor landscape can reduce the economic value of architecture and built environment design. It can result in developments that are in the wrong location, inefficient and costly to build and poor quality, all undermining efforts to ensure that our towns and cities are thriving and liveable.

In terms of the value of jobs in the built environment, we would like to highlight the recent *Classifying and Measuring the Creative Industries* consultation⁴, undertaken by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) earlier this year. The purpose of this consultation was to work out how to measure the contribution of the creative industries to the UK economy. In our response, the Landscape Institute makes clear that the current classification system is inadequate because it does not allow the value of investment other than in buildings to be properly captured. If DCMS is truly committed to measuring the true value the built environment design then it is vital that the current system is revised.

2.2 It is claimed that high standards of architectural and built environment design add economic value. Can this be demonstrated and, if so, how?

A high standard of architectural and built environment design can bring together sustainable development and strong identity while being economically viable. This requires a thorough understanding of a site's social, economic and environmental characteristics i.e. its landscape context.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/classifying-and-measuring-the-creative-industries-consultation-on-proposed-changes>

In 2011, the Landscape Institute published *Why invest in landscape?*⁵ The publication presents examples of projects where landscape has been an integral part of the development process, and how as a result of this developers, businesses and communities have reaped economic benefits. The projects use measures such as increased footfall, saleability and higher rents to demonstrate added economic value.

The Square in Barnstaple, formerly a busy roundabout which effectively formed a barrier between the town centre and its attractive waterfront, has been transformed into a thriving town centre venue. This was achieved by relocating traffic to the perimeter of the site and creating an attractive, robust and flexible square. The design enhances existing features such as the North Devon Museum and other local important monuments and has opened up views towards the waterfront. The Museum reported an increase in visitor numbers of approximately 56 per cent following the completion of landscape interventions at the Square. While of course it is difficult to ascertain the added economic value of such an increased, undoubtedly the impact for the Museum has been a positive one.

At Cambourne, Cambridgeshire, one of the key ways in which landscape design has had a positive economic impact has been through increased saleability. This is summarised by the Project Director for Cambourne and Major Projects Director for Taylor Wimpey who stated that *“The real benefit to the community and added value that is reflected in a premium price for good property in a nice environment is only realised when the masterplan is supported by first class landscape design and implementation. The combined effect of good initial planning, implementation and good long term maintenance all adds to the reputation that Cambourne enjoys as a desirable place to live and this is reflected by consistent sales and ongoing delivery of homes with obvious benefits for major developers Taylor Wimpey and Bovis.”*

At Princesshay, an historic area in the centre of Exeter within the old city walls, the primary objective of the masterplan was to create a thriving, retail-led mixed use development to regenerate the city. The landscape was central in achieving this objective, in particular its role in the creation of lively new spaces and the establishment of key thoroughfares via a permeable pedestrian network, while at the same time respecting and enhance the heritage assets within the city centre. Figures from Exeter City Council have demonstrated that Zone A rents have increased since the redevelopment of the Princesshay area. At the time of publishing *Why invest in landscape?* figures showed that in 2006 Zone A rents were in the region of £220/sq ft compared to approximately £230/sq ft in 2009. Most recent searches have found that the latest rent values at Princesshay stand at approximately £240/sq ft. Similarly, each year, over a week in March, pedestrian flow is counted and stood at 112,000 in 2006 but had increased to 133,400 in 2009. While of course a variety of factors may have influenced these positive trends, it is nonetheless likely that investing in landscape has been central in achieving these results.

Research findings announced earlier in 2013 by Visit Britain highlighted that approximately £7.8 billion was spent by tourists enjoying trips to the UK’s green spaces during 2012⁶. This

⁵ http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/WhyInvestFinalA4pages_000.pdf

⁶ <http://www.visitbritain.org/mediaroom/pressreleases/parksandgardens.aspx>

reminds us that from the perspective of the visitor, as indeed from the general user, the experience of a place is about public space and relationship with landscape context as well as about the appreciation of buildings. Taken as a whole, these experiences have a very significant bearing on economic performance.

Several organisations publish lists of the world's most liveable cities. Although they use the terms 'liveable' to mean something rather different to what we mean by it, the broad sense of the term is the same – they are ranking cities by 'the experience of living there'. According to the 2012 Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)⁷, and Mercer rankings⁸, no UK city is in the world top 10 for liveability. London ranks 38th worldwide according to Mercer, and no other UK city is in the top 50. These rankings, regardless of their specific methodologies, serve as a useful indicator for how UK cities are perceived around the world, and as we can see, this country is very far from being 'a world leader'. The main impact of these rankings is in terms of businesses making decisions about location and investment. If Britain is widely perceived by the international business community as a good place for business but an unattractive place to live, the effects on UK plc will be very damaging indeed. We believe there are many useful lessons to learn from Singapore in terms of how to conceive, design and manage urban space in ways which enhance the attractiveness of our cities to investors and visitors alike.

2.3 What is the commercial value of our historic built environment for the UK brand and for local economic and tourism?

We are surprised that this Review should be asking for new evidence when so much is readily available. The value of our historic environment should be quite clear to DCMS and it is rather worrying that they appear, through this Review, to regard it as a new, interesting or as yet unanswered question. There is ample evidence on this matter available from VisitBritain and from the regular 'Heritage Counts' survey undertaken by English Heritage⁹. We commend these authoritative and widely-used resources to the Review Panel.

It is important to recognise that Britain's landscapes are mostly designed, mostly contain built elements and have great value to the UK brand, particularly for tourism. Again there is ample evidence on this point from VisitBritain, English Heritage and the National Trust.

2.4 How do we ensure the culture of architectural and built environment design excellence is part of a perceived national brand identity that can be exported and how can our expertise (such as placemaking and sustainability) be offered to a rapidly urbanising world?

It is an unfortunate British habit that we like to congratulate ourselves on how world class we are, instead of making the effort to learn lessons from other countries which are sometimes far ahead of us in their thinking. Singapore is already well head of the UK in BIM adoption, so it is already reaping the benefits of reduced costs and integrated decision-making in the construction sector. At the same time, it is ahead of most countries in its thought leadership on the liveability agenda and has turned itself into the greenest and most attractive place in

⁷ <http://store.eiu.com/product.aspx?pid=475217632>

⁸ <http://www.mercer.com/qualityofliving>

⁹ <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Southeast Asia. South Korea has much to teach us on smart cities, and Australia is investing millions of dollars into the research and design of water-sensitive cities. If we think there is brand value in these things we need to catch up with these countries, not pretend we are ahead of them.

As far as the London 2012 Olympics are concerned, we have already missed a key part of the brand identity. The individual buildings for the Olympics were naturally objects of great beauty and utility, as well as models of sustainable architecture. However the key achievement of London was to think beyond 'iconic buildings' and to engage with the broader perspective suggested in the question - 'placemaking'. That placemaking involved key decisions at masterplanning stage and in the design of the overall site, including realignment of waterways, soil reclamation, the construction of parks, the enhancement of biodiversity and a great deal of thought about legacy use by the local community. None of that is conveyed by aerial photos of the stadium, magnificently impressive as they are. As far as our brand identity is concerned, placemaking has been almost entirely left out of the story of the Olympics, as can be seen from the suite of materials recently produced for the 'Beyond 2012' campaign run by the Design Council. There is little sign of placemaking there. We are definitely missing a trick. Our ability to integrate grey and green infrastructure, set well-designed buildings within well-conceived settings and plan for long-term sustainability is indeed a key asset for UK plc. For some reason, we do not seem to be selling it.

2.5 To enhance market leadership in built environment design, how can we ensure that the UK is leading and responding to innovations in technology, sustainability and communications in an era of rapid globalisation?

The UK must think creatively about the physical and environmental infrastructure it needs to compete in an era of rapid globalisation and to ensure that our cities are competitive on an international stage in terms of their liveability. In many parts of the UK we are relying on the infrastructure of the past to meet the needs of the future, and in the process we are perpetuating unsustainable patterns of development. Physical and environmental infrastructure must be renewed by adopting innovations in technology, sustainability and communications. Green infrastructure will need to be central to this renewed infrastructure, designed to provide a climate change resilient and sustainable framework for growth. Water sensitive urban design should be a key approach to the ways in which we plan and design our built environment and we must incorporate the natural environment into the fabric of our towns and cities to support wildlife, prevent flooding and promote health, wellbeing and quality of life.

The government's drive for rapid adoption of Building Information Modelling (BIM) across the construction sector is very welcome, not least because it provides excellent conditions for considering site properties and long-term management issues at the early stages of a design.

2.6 What other recommendations would you like to make relating to this particular theme?

The built environment would benefit from the professions responsible for its delivery having a greater understanding of clients' commercial drivers, particularly when it comes to large scale development. A better understanding and awareness of the commercial realities of development would allow designers to find the best outcomes that are commercially viable, well-designed and sustainable.

The nature of the development industry in the UK, particularly volume housebuilding, is not configured to capture the value added by high standards or architectural and built environment design. The value added is often only realised when a building or place has matured, and often this value comes from good placemaking and landscape design rather than building design. Furthermore, too few players in the UK development industry are set up to invest for the long term and few retain a stake in development so that they can capture the subsequent value uplift that comes from good architectural and built environment design.

Section 3: Cultural heritage and the built environment

3.1 How does architecture and the built environment contribute to our society and its identity and how should we evaluate this?

The Review states that this topic is about '...the value of the historic built environment as a cultural asset and in successful place-making.' It is critical that the Review accepts that cultural heritage is more than just buildings. Our human society has made marks on the landscape over millennia. Landscapes, spaces, places, views, vistas, landmarks, routes, boundaries, geological and manmade features, all have cultural significance that is just as, if not more, significant than the built environment. Here again we commend to the Review Panel the value of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) as a conceptual tool which integrates the historic and contemporary environment, built and natural, within a balanced framework. We also reiterate our point about the value of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as a mechanism for integrating new built form into historic contexts and creating dynamic, successful new places.

Heritage is a fundamental component of successful places that support health and wellbeing, sustainable communities and places that people enjoy. The historic built environment, including spaces around and between buildings such as streets, parks and gardens, give places their character and helps to define their local distinctiveness.

English Heritage Guidance, *Setting of Historic Assets* (2012), advises that the character of a historic place is the sum of all its attributes. The Guidance states that *"These may include its relationships with people, now and through time; its visual aspects; and the features, materials and spaces associated with its history, including its original configuration and subsequent losses and changes."*

Without historic streets, views and mature townscapes, our towns, villages and cities would be as bland and as standardised as modern housing estates. Unexpected contrasts between

different parts within the street scene, and surprising views out, define the identity and character of a place.

Extensive heritage assets, such as landscapes and townscapes, can include many heritage components and their nested and overlapping settings, in addition to having a setting of their own. Entire towns and conservation areas also have their settings. *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5) was helpful in that it defined the setting of a heritage asset as “...the surroundings in which [the asset] is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.”

English Heritage ‘Conservation Principles’ suggests a method for evaluating the contribution/significance of heritage assets. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building, an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape. People value historic places in many different ways, related to evidence about past activities, historical value, aesthetic appearance, and collective experiences or memories for the community.

We recommend that the significance of heritage assets (including landscape, townscape and visual settings) is assessed using established English Heritage guidance including ‘Conservation Principles’, ‘Understanding Place’ and ‘Setting of Heritage Assets’. We would also recommend that in evaluating the contribution of heritage assets to society, consideration must be given to the aspects of heritage valued by local communities.

3.2 Do we value heritage, whether historic or recent, evenly throughout the country?

This is a very odd question and we are not really clear what the Panel is trying to establish. For almost 20 years the Heritage Lottery Fund has been supporting projects in every corner of the country. In total more than £5bn has been spent on over 35,000 projects, so we take this to be a reasonably good indicator that heritage of all sorts is valued highly by people right across the country.

3.3 How do we make sure that new architecture understands and responds to its cultural and historic context?

We suggest that the Review uses a clear definition of context; for example, the relationship between a building/space/landscape and any surrounding features that are relevant to its significance. These relationships can be cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional (*English Heritage: Setting of Historic Assets 2012*). They apply irrespective of distance, extending well beyond what might be considered a particular asset’s setting, and can include the relationship of one heritage asset to another of the same period or function, or with the same designer or architect.

Lack of care often comes from a landowner’s wish to ‘sweep clean’ and impose his/her own identity on a place, or from cost-cutting at the design stage. Designers, including architects and landscape architects, are trained to start by assessing the context and local character of the site, the quality of the natural environment and the contribution of historic and landscape features to the ‘sense of place’. Good designers will take the best from the past and make

good use of existing resources and assets on a site, to create development that is sustainable.

Once the original use of a historic build or site has ceased, the designer's task is to find a long-term solution that will be accepted and even welcomed by the community. In some locations conservation objectives can appear restrictive, especially when they resist adaptations to new uses and seek to ensure that the original purpose could be reinstated. Keeping everything the same is not usually logical unless the intention is to create a museum. Spaces and places need to attract people to live, work and visit or they will not survive.

The National Planning Policy Framework appears to accept that there is a balance to be struck. Paragraph 128 states that "...in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". Paragraph 132 advises that "...*significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification*".

New architecture should be tested at design review (also required by the National Planning Policy Framework) to ensure it responds to the context of the site. If design review does not take place, then pre-application discussions, and the Design and Access Statement submitted with an application, are the only tools available to assess the understanding and intentions of the architect or developer.

We recommend that the design review process could be improved by requiring decision-makers such as planners and local authority elected members, to undertake design training. This suggestion could equally be applied to politicians and developers). We also recommend that planning policies and guidance should require all development proposals to identify what is to be retained, and why, and the opportunities for change – before the design process begins.

3.4 Are there characteristics in older buildings and places that are valued which are lacking in new buildings and places? What should the design of new places learn from the best of the past?

Older buildings and sites are distinctive, attractive, complex and inviting. People tend to cherish them as a physical record of local history which is more interesting than the present. Details such as porches, gables, gates and boundary features may be decorative rather than strictly utilitarian. The best of the past pays attention to its landscape setting, townscape or street-scene and to the ways people will experience it. Too many new buildings disregard their local context, settings and history of the place, and become meaningless to the community.

Many examples of the successful evolution of places and spaces can be seen in our towns, particularly in conservation areas. However, there is a strong argument that new buildings and landscapes should not respond to history by replicating or by pastiche. The clear

distinction between old and new, in terms of high quality modern design, can successfully regenerate a neglected site or building and create a stunning new space or place.

English Heritage guidance (*Setting of Historic Assets 2012*) has much to say about heritage settings and urban design that is relevant to the review. For example “there are many examples of innovative buildings and structures in historic areas, but where a development in the setting of a heritage asset is designed to be distinctive or dominant and, as a result, causes harm to the asset’s significance, there will need to be justification for that harm (in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework).

The Landscape Institute recommends that those responsible for new development should be required to explain, as part of the planning process, how the new responds to the old, how the old can be adapted and improved by the new, bearing in mind the features that local people have identified as important to them.

3.5 What is the role for new technologies in conservation to enable older buildings to meet modern needs and to be adapted with less impact on their historic features?

DCMS is not able to ‘act as an intelligent customer of science’¹⁰ according to a 2012 report produced by the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee¹¹. This report focused particularly on the absence of a Chief Scientific Adviser in DCMS and the general lack of any sense among ministers or within the department that science and technology might have much to contribute to the conservation of cultural heritage (this, incidentally, is another area where ministers like to assert that Britain ‘leads the world’). The 2012 report followed up on an enquiry into Science and Heritage which the Science and Technology Committee undertook in 2006, which described heritage science as a discipline in decline, undermined by government indifference. The government responded to this report by doing nothing. In this as in other matters touched on by this Review, there is no leadership from DCMS, and indeed little sign of any intelligent interest.

Fortunately the AHRC and EPSRC responded to the Lords report by co-funding an innovative Science and Heritage Programme¹² which has supported research into a number of very interesting and ground breaking areas, including uses of tomography for non-invasive imaging of sensitive sites, spectroscopic imaging, understanding the deterioration of historic concretes, and the use of sensors and the internet of things to gather information on the impact of climate change in historic buildings. This programme is being led by the UCL Centre for Sustainable Heritage¹³ which is also involved in projects funded through the European Research Frameworks. The Noah’s Ark project on climate change resilience, funded through the 6th Framework Programme and led by the Centre for Sustainable Heritage, won a Europa Nostra Award in 2009; further projects are underway within the 7th Framework programme. The UCL participation in these programmes has been undertaken despite the near-total lack of interest from DCMS in UK participation in the Research Frameworks, which has not been conducive to the UK benefitting from major tranches of EU

¹⁰ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/ldsctech/291/29105.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/news/science-heritage-report-published/>

¹² <http://www.heritagescience.ac.uk/science-and-heritage>

¹³ <http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/graduate/csh/csh-home>

research funding in heritage science, and meant that most of the money invested has gone to institutions in other states. There are plenty of ways in which historic buildings can be turned into smart buildings; new materials, technologies and processes have a major part to play in allowing us to preserve, adapt and re-use our historic building fabric, but based on present indicators the likelihood is that the UK will fall further behind other countries in developing and deploying these innovative solutions.

Section 4: Promoting education, outreach and skills

4.1 What is the potential contribution of built environment education at primary and secondary school level, both as a cultural subject in its own right and as a way of teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and other subjects?

The benefit of incorporating elements of built environment education at primary and secondary school level would be significant. However we do not recommend advocacy of one particular discipline, but rather a professionally non-specific exploration of the ways in which 21st century challenges can be met through by applying some of key concepts underpinning architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and engineering.

We would like to draw the attention of the Farrell Review to the US-based 'STEM to STEAM' initiative¹⁴ which seeks to embed art and design into integrated and creative education. The drawing of disciplinary boundaries has tended to create silos. Specialisation still needs to be encouraged but not at the expense of creativity, collaboration, communication and cooperation. This all-encompassing approach to education should encourage hands-on 'embodied' learning as well as the acquisition of abstract knowledge. However the benefits would be limited if the built environment was only used to teach STEM subjects. The increasing importance of Building Information Modelling (BIM) means that the richness of disciplines and subjects that work together needs to be made clear to students. The built environment touches on areas as diverse as ecology, sociology and philosophy as much as it does on STEM subjects.

The Landscape Institute runs an annual event in schools called Green Day¹⁵, aimed at primary pupils and key stages 1-3. This provides a range of engaging activities for children to take part in, which encourage them to think about their environment, sustainability, and what changes they can make in their use of buildings and school grounds which will make them more sustainable. There are other examples of this kind of 'soft' approach and we believe initiatives of this sort, together with introductions to design, are of more value than 'a unit on architecture'.

4.2 What is the role of the architecture and built environment in enabling a better public understanding of issues related to sustainability and the environment.

The main roles we suggest are:

¹⁴ <http://stemtosteam.org/>

¹⁵ <http://greendaynetwork.ning.com/>

- Leading public discussion around the issue of liveability
- Promoting public understanding of the value of integrating of grey and green infrastructure
- Encouraging the adoption of biophilic design
- Speaking out clearly against new developments which do not promote sustainability
- Embracing the enhancement of biodiversity in their design process so that clients can rapidly learn that biodiversity is not just a countryside issue

We are confident that landscape architects are well placed to play an important role in enhancing this public understanding. We are aware that among planners, architects and engineers there are differing levels of interest and expertise in these themes, and we think that overall, there is probably a need to significantly raise awareness, knowledge and skills within the built environment professions before we can play our part with the public to the best of our capacity.

4.3 How can high standards of design be achieved and promoted through neighbourhood plans?

Neighbourhood plans are an important new part of the planning framework. Given that they must be in general conformity with the local plan to which they relate, it will be important that these local plans provide for high standards of design. A strong local plan with a design policy in place could be one way of enabling high standards of design.

There is a role for the built environment professions in communicating with local people. A recent Landscape Institute publication, 'Local Green infrastructure: helping communities make the most of their landscape'¹⁶ was designed to assist landscape architects in their communication with neighbourhood forums/parish councils and to assist them to educate and raise aspirations in one of the key issues of liveability – green infrastructure.

It is important to recognise that there will be different views of what constitutes a 'high standard of design', and that local communities may have aspirations for their area that are different to those of professionals who may be involved in the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

4.4. How can we better ensure that awareness and support of high standards of design are shared among all the professions concerned with architecture, the built environment, and quality places?

- Develop the national dialogue about liveability, involving both professionals and the wider community in a conversation about how we want to live in the future;
- Set expectations at the highest level through explicit commitments to good design in the next iteration of the construction sector strategy;
- Treat design in the built environment as being as worthy of public investment as other key industrial sectors. The automotive sector strategy¹⁷ includes a commitment of £0.5bn of public investment in research and new technologies. The construction sector is given

¹⁶ <http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/policy/GreenInfrastructure.php>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/driving-success-uk-automotive-strategy-for-growth-and-sustainability>

targets for cutting costs. It is understood that design quality is a crucial issue of commercial viability in the automotive sector; as far as construction is concerned, it seems to be an optional extra;

- Train professionals from a wide range of different backgrounds to contribute to the Design Review process and promote Design Review to a wider base of potential clients;
- Teach the client to expect the best – train elected councillors and other local decision-makers in how to challenge designs they are presented with;
- Make more widespread use of design competitions, as suggested in the 2012 RIBA publication 'Building Ladders of Opportunity'¹⁸;
- Develop innovative CPD and INSET offers for cross-professional groups to train in the use of BIM technology. Currently much BIM education and training is profession-specific; and
- Encourage use of the CIC Design Quality Indicator¹⁹.

4.5 How can we ensure fair representation (gender, ethnicity, class etc.) and better preparation for those wishing to enter into higher education and the built environment professions?

The landscape architecture profession has a 50/50 gender split and has had four women Presidents in the last sixty years. In this respect it is some way ahead of many other professions in the sector. In terms of ethnic diversity however our profession is probably some way behind many of the other built environment professions.

The Stephen Lawrence Trust has been working for many years to encourage students from non-traditional backgrounds to go into the built environment professions. The Landscape Institute currently has two scholarships set up with them to support students through university courses. This approach allows the SLT, with its experience and expertise in community outreach, to identify suitable candidates for the profession to support. If other professional bodies in the sector made a similar commitment, proportionate to their size, RTPI could offer 8 Stephen Lawrence scholarships, RIBA 16 and RICS around 30. Other professions may have decided that there are better ways of approaching this issue than giving scholarships, but we cite this as example of how something relatively simple to set up could have a relatively significant impact on the makeup of the professions. We have all been talking about improving diversity for twenty years or more, and given the ease with simple measures like scholarships can be put into place, we are surprised that they are not more widely used.

In recent years, there has understandably been a strong emphasis on expanding access to higher education. However the rapid changes to the economy of HE and the growing reach of MOOCs offer some very interesting possibilities for increasing access to the built environment professions. At the same time there is a growing interest in the development of apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships. These developments need to be embraced by the professions in the spirit of using them to seek new ways of drawing in people from non-traditional backgrounds. The professions should also maintain a strong line against unpaid

¹⁸ <http://www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAHoldings/PolicyAndInternationalRelations/Policy/PublicAffairs/2012/BuildingLaddersofOpportunity.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.dqi.org.uk/website/default.aspx>

internships, which serve primarily to reinforce the economic and social advantages of established groups.

4.6 What other recommendations would you like to make relating to this particular theme?

Notwithstanding the developments mentioned above, the design professions in the UK will continue to draw most of their new recruits through the higher education system, and this system is chronically unstable. Market mechanisms have been used to push universities towards recruiting ever greater numbers of students, whereupon changes to the fee regime and visa regulations have left them suddenly short of the student numbers they require to survive. Teaching design is relatively expensive compared to humanities or other subjects, so there are strong economic drivers pushing universities away from the delivery of quality design teaching. Here is yet another sector where Britain likes to tell itself that it leads the world, when in reality design education in other countries is rapidly becoming more attractive to international students. Indeed, given the fact that UK students can study at English-language institutions across the EU for the same fees as home students (minimal in comparison with English fees), we should expect to see more of our home-grown talent exported at an early career stage, possibly never to return.

Education in the built environment professions must not be reduced to simple training. It is important that practitioners are thoughtful and ethical, and able to communicate and cooperate effectively. To do so they must have the ability to come to understand a site's context through critical thinking, interaction and research. This is only possible if practitioners possess the life skills provided by a quality education.

The great strength of the education in the built environment professions is the importance of studio time which, at its best, combines making and meaning in a supportive environment where there is plenty of one-on-one interaction and extensive opportunity for peer learning. Rather than continually defending 'expensive and time-consuming' studio education system, its merits should be promoted to all those disciplines concerned with our built environment.

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