

DESIGN REVIEW PANELS

Updated August 2010

1. WHAT IS DESIGN REVIEW?

Design Review services aim to raise the quality of the design of buildings and places. They do this by providing independent, objective, expert feedback on the design of proposed developments. The service works through a panel of experienced professionals (architects, urban designers, engineers, transport planners, sustainability experts, and landscape architects).

Advice focuses on a wide range of built environment issues including commissioning new buildings, public realm design, masterplans, urban frameworks, policy documents, public art and green space strategies for both commercial and residential developments.

There are a range of panels across the UK, from the National Design Review Panel run by CABI, regional panels, sub regional panels and local panels. The eight regional panels are independent and are generally funded by the development agency for their region. Each panel is hosted and managed in slightly different circumstances; some are managed from within architecture centres, some within Regional Centres of Excellence for Sustainable Communities (RCEs) or independent built environment organisations.

Regional panels work along side CABI to share and ensure best practice, maintain consistency, avoid duplication and to allocate schemes to the appropriate panel. In August 2009, the eight regional panels and CABI agreed to form an 'affiliated network'. This network sees the panels work together to ensure that schemes that are appropriate for design review are seen either by the CABI national panel or by one of the affiliated panels. The affiliated panels were identified by the Chief Planner in 2009 as a source of design advice for significant development projects in England.

2. HOW DOES IT WORK?

Design review panels generally meet regularly (often monthly) to consider three or four schemes that will have a significant impact on their local area. The panel study the designs, listen to a presentation from the developers / clients and their architects / design team, discuss the proposals and give feedback. This is followed by a letter which summarises the panel's views.

All panels prefer to see proposals as early as possible in the design and planning process, so that the feedback can be easily incorporated into revised designs. So it is best if schemes are reviewed at a pre-planning-application stage, but design review can also be used during the planning process.

Where schemes are viewed at a pre-application stage the deliberations of the panel can be kept confidential.

At the session, the lead designer will present the scheme to the Panel. The materials used for the presentation will depend upon the size, scale and nature of the project and the stage it has reached in its development and should be discussed with the relevant panel prior to the review session.

Appropriate material might include:

- Analytical contextual plans, showing site, location and historical context
- Aerial photographs of the site and surroundings
- Masterplans, layout drawings and site plans showing existing and proposed features – including those that are listed; sufficient context to understand the site in relation to its surroundings; land ownership; vehicular and pedestrian movement
- Plans, sections and elevations of proposed buildings
- Landscape analysis and details of the landscape approach
- Materials that demonstrate the proposed user experience, including access, movement, views (from within and outside the site) and security
- Drawings to give a flavour of proposed architectural approach, details and materials
- Models, rough sketches and computer generated imagery
- Materials that explain the process of design development including brief, engagement and procurement proposals
- Details of previous projects by the designer or architect, perhaps in a brief practice profile or prior reference to a website or very short list of schemes
- Electronic models or fly-throughs

Issues covered might include:

- **Process** – procurement; consultation; appropriate skills in design team
- **Context** – wider regional; response to setting; impact on adjacent sites
- **Scale, height, massing and grain** – relationship to existing buildings; appropriateness
- **Density, use and mix** – scale of development: variety; local needs; masterplan realisation
- **Accessibility and permeability** – patterns of movement; safety; integration of car parking; service access; public transport
- **Legibility** – is it a well structured building layout, clarity of movement?
- **Quality of the public realm and landscaping** - is the landscape strategy an integral part of the scheme? Do the spaces have a clearly defined purpose?
- **Public and private spaces** – are the boundaries clearly defined?
- **Quality of architecture** – coherence, integrity, imagination; will functional requirements be met?
- **Details and materials** – quality of materials; is the design fully integrated; are materials locally sourced?

- **Sustainability** – minimisation of energy requirements; waste reduction; support of Biodiversity; recyclable materials; construction technologies considered; location and orientation?
- **Adaptability** – flexibility over time, internal & external
- **Character** - is it distinctive; does the scheme exploit existing buildings or topography?

3. WHICH REGIONAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL OPERATES IN WHICH REGION?

▪ EAST OF ENGLAND

This region comprises the six counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Inspire East run the design and enabling service for the East region. For more information see:

<http://www.inspire-east.org.uk/designreviewservice.aspx>

Contact: DesignAndEnabling@inspire-east.org.uk

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Breckland House
St Nicholas Street
Thetford
Norfolk
IP24 1BT

T: 01223 484644

▪ EAST MIDLANDS

The East Midlands includes the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland.

East Midlands Design Review Panel (EMDRP) is run by Opun the architecture and built environment centre for the East Midlands

Contact: e designreview@opun.org.uk

De Montfort University
Fletcher Building
The Gateway
Leicester
LE1 9BH

T: 07939 482 781

www.opun.org.uk

▪ LONDON

There is currently no regional panel operating in London. Contact CABE for further information: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/design-review>.

▪ **NORTH EAST**

There are four sub regions of North East England divided into administrative districts. Northumberland in the north of the region has 6 districts: Berwick upon Tweed, Alnwick, Tynedale, Castle Morpeth, Wansbeck and Blyth Valley. Tyne and Wear in the east of the region has five districts: North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland. County Durham lies south of both Northumberland and Tyne & Wear and has six districts: Wear Valley, Teesdale, Derwentside, Durham, Sedgfield and Easington. Tees Valley is found in the south-east of the region and comprises five unitary authority areas: Hartlepool, Darlington, Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland.

The North East Design Review & Enabling Service

The design review service is run by Ignite, the Regional Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Communities in the North East. For more information see:

<http://www.ignite-ne.com/ignite/>

Contact: designreview@ignite-ne.com.

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Newburn Riverside
Newcastle upon tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE15 8NY
T: 0191 238 7540

▪ **NORTH WEST**

The region comprises Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

The design review panel for the North West is run by Places Matter! an Architecture & Built Environment Centre. For further information see:

<http://www.placesmatter.co.uk/design-review>

Contact: Charlotte Myhrum, Design Review Manager:

charlotte.myhrum@placesmatter.co.uk

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82 Wood Street
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▪ **SOUTH EAST**

The South East region encompasses 19 county and unitary authorities and 55 districts, stretching in an arc around London, from Thanet in the south-east to the New Forest in the south-west and to Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes in the north-west.

South East Design Review Panel (SERDP) is run by Kent Architecture Centre. For further information see:

<http://www.architecturecentre.org>. and <http://www.serdp.org.uk>

Contact: Geoff Noble, Head of Design Review or Robert Offord, Design Advisor T: 01634 401 166 or E: sarah.brown@kentarchitecture.co.uk

Admiral's Offices
Historic Dockyard
Chatham
Kent
ME4 4TZ

▪ **SOUTH WEST**

The region comprises Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & Swindon, West of England, Somerset, Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The South West Design Review Panel is run by Creating Excellence, for more information see:

<http://www.creatingexcellence.org.uk/regeneration-renewal-article112-p1.html>

Contact: Timothy Cantell, Design Review Panel Manager <

E: drp@creatingexcellence.org.uk

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East Reach, Taunton
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▪ **WEST MIDLANDS**

The West Midlands comprises the counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire; the unitary authorities of Herefordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford and Wrekin; and the seven metropolitan districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

MADE* Design Review Panel covers the whole of the West Midlands apart from the local authority areas of Stoke on Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands which are covered by our sister organisation Urban Vision North Staffordshire. MADE* is the architecture centre for the West Midlands. See www.made.org.uk

Contact: David Tittle, Head of Design Excellence at MADE

E: david@made.org.uk Tel: 0121 633 9403

Urban Vision North Staffordshire works in partnership with MADE* and covers Stoke on Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands. For further information see: <http://www.uvns.org/designreviewpanel/index.htm>
Contact: T: 01782 575321 or 01782 790595 E: info@uvns.org

▪ **YORKSHIRE**

The region is made up of four sub-regions: Humber which includes the East Riding, Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire; North Yorkshire which includes York, Hambleton, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, Northallerton, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough and Selby; South Yorkshire which includes Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield; and West Yorkshire which includes Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.

Design Review Panel of Yorkshire is run by Integrate Yorkshire, Integrate Yorkshire is a programme within Yorkshire Forward's Environment Directorate. For further information see:

<http://www.integreatyorkshire.com/design-review-panel.htm>

Contact: [e kate.fewson@yorkshire-forward.com](mailto:kate.fewson@yorkshire-forward.com)

www.integreatyorkshire.com/yorkshire-design-reviewservice

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4. WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

CABE, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Landscape Institute.

Design review: principles and practice

CABE: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/design-review>

All regional panels work closely with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) who provide a national design review service and support and inform the work of regional panels.

- National design review panel: for significant schemes across England
- London 2012 design review panel: for proposals for London 2012
- Schools design review panel: for secondary schools in the Building Schools for the Future programme
- Crossrail design review panel: for seven new Crossrail stations in London

The national panel's remit, set out by government, is to review the design quality of schemes in England considered to be significant because of their size, use, site, impact on local planning policy, or potential to set a precedent.

CABE has produced guidance and several publications including:
How to do design review, Creating and running a successful panel

Design review, How CABE evaluates quality in architecture and urban design

Helping local people choose good design, August 2010

<http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/helping-local-people-choose-good-design>