



**The Edinburgh Urban Design Panel**  
Remit, Functions, Roles and Procedures

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# About the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel

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The Edinburgh Urban Design Panel was conceived as part of the City of Edinburgh Council's Design Initiative. It is one of a range of measures which are aimed at raising both the quality of the built environment in Edinburgh and the profile of design. It is an important ingredient in the pre-application process for major development proposals in the city.

## Why have design reviews?

A high quality of urban design is a key objective for the Planning process. Design review also recognises design is a complex matter which can benefit from informed advice at an early stage.

## What are the aims of Edinburgh's Panel?

To contribute constructive advice which can be used by design teams, planners and developers to develop proposals in a positive way, to impart advice on relevant Council policy and guidance and to provide a focus for projects significant to the city.

## Who are the Panel members?

The members are drawn from a range of organisations with particular expertise to offer to the design review process. See the stakeholders and contacts page for full details.

## How does the Panel operate?

The Panel is chaired by David Leslie, Acting Head of Planning at the Council, with a role to decide on

*Introduction*

*This report relates to the development of the former Nighthall Technology Site South (Greenhillburg)*

*This is the first time that the proposals have been reviewed by the Panel*

*No declarations of interest were made by any panel members in relation to the scheme*

*This report should be read in conjunction with the pre meeting papers which provide an overview, context, concept, plans, sections and 3D visualisations of the scheme*

*Andrew Trigger provided an overview of the planning considerations as noted in the Planning Issues Paper.*

*Robert Evans and Jeremy Scott presented the proposal. Refer to the pre meeting presentation papers.*

*A PAN notice has been lodged and two community consultation events have taken place. It is envisaged that a PPP Application will be lodged at the end of February 2011.*

*The Panel and is not attributable to any one individual. The members who are represented at the panel*



projects to be presented and to facilitate discussion during meetings at the City Chambers. After introduction from the relevant Planning Officer the developer's project team gives a short presentation of their proposals and then answers a series of questions from the Panel members who, with the project team present, then identify key issues for comment, the aim being to reach a group consensus. A design review report is drafted and circulated to Panel members for validation before being issued to the project team within two weeks of the meeting. The report and presentation material are not made public until a planning ap-



plication for the project is received.

#### **What impact will the Panel have?**

The Planning system has changed, placing greater emphasis on addressing issues earlier in the process. The Panel is a component of this change, contributing to improved transparency, inclusive engagement and shared exploration of design issues with key consultees.

#### **How many reviews has the Panel carried out?**

Between its inception March 2009 and November 2013, the Panel carried out 93 reviews. Of these reviews, 79 were of development proposals with the



remainder of planning policy and guidance.

#### **How often does it meet?**

Meetings are held monthly on dates agreed by the Panel in the City Chambers.

Timescales for individual reviews may vary depending on the scale and complexity of the proposals considered, however, typically 1 hour is allowed per review.

It is expected that each panel meeting will consider 2 or 3 proposals.

# Remit, Functions and Roles

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## Remit

The Edinburgh Urban Design Panel aims to raise the quality of the built environment within the City of Edinburgh Council area. In achieving this aim, the Panel will:

- 1 provide constructive and timely design advice which can be used by design teams, planners and, or developers to develop their proposals in a positive way;
- 2 provide design advice which is well reasoned and aims to be objective;
- 3 provide design advice on development proposals of a significant or complex nature and council policy and guidance with design significance;
- 4 provide design advice on projects which would set new standards;
- 5 provide design advice on building types which, if repeated, would have a cumulative impact;
- 6 not review proposals that are to be engaged with via Architecture and Design Scotland's Design Forum service.

## Functions

The Edinburgh Urban Design Panel will:

- 7 be provided with formatted information in advance of any meeting of the Panel to allow a full understanding of the design issues raised by their proposals;
- 8 at the Panel meeting, be presented with the design aspects of proposals in as concise and comprehensive a manner possible;
- 9 seek to reach consensus on the advice to be provided and explain the rationale for this;
- 10 agree key priorities and provide written advice which summarises the discussion held at the Panel meeting;
- 11 allow advice to be viewed by the public once a planning application has been made.

## Roles

The Edinburgh Urban Design Panel members will:

- 12 provide advice which draws on their professional knowledge and / or experience;
- 13 advise their respective organisations of the Panel's views;
- 14 adhere to the principles of conduct for the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel;
- 15 expect honesty and openness from all presenters to the Panel;
- 16 expect an undertaking from presenters to consider, reflect and take into account the advice provided in the development of the design;
- 17 on a yearly basis, take part in a review of the effectiveness of the Panel and make any changes as necessary in light of this;
- 18 provide representation to the the yearly A+DS Local Authority Design Review Panel meetings.



# Procedures for the Panel's membership organisations

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## The panel members will:

- provide constructive advice which can be used by architects, planners and, or developers to develop their proposals in a positive way;
- provide advice which is well reasoned and which aims to be objective;
- provide advice which draws on their professional competence and / or experience
- seek to reach consensus on the advice to be provided and explain the rationale for this;
- ensure they are available to comment on or approve the design review report.
- allow advice to be viewed by the public once a planning application has been made;
- as Panel members advise their respective organisations of the Panel's views;
- adhere to the Principles of Conduct for the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel.



Architecture+Design Scotland  
Aithearsachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

## Architecture and Design Scotland will:

- ensure that 1 member of their professional staff or 1 of their Design Forum Panel members can attend each Panel meeting;
- Ensure their representative will provide advice which could reasonably be expected to be reflective of the views of A+DS albeit without

prejudice to any later view of A+DS;

- Provide direct advice on Locally Significant Projects through its Design Forum Service.
- Update the Panel on when its reports of development proposals within Edinburgh have become publicly available on its website.



## The Cockburn Association will:

- ensure that 1 member of their professional staff or board can attend each Panel meeting;
- ensure their representative will provide advice which could reasonably be expected to be reflective of the views of the Cockburn Association albeit without prejudice to any later view of the Cockburn Association.



## The Edinburgh Architectural Association will:

- establish a small pool of their members from which panel members can be drawn and ensure that 3 of their members can attend each Panel meeting;
- refresh approximately a third of this pool on a yearly basis to ensure that there is a degree of continuity which is balanced by new voices

being brought to the panel;

- ensure that panel members are well respected within their profession, have a track record in achieving high quality design and are able to communicate effectively and objectively their view on design matters.

# ESALA

Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture

## The Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture will:

- ensure that 1 member of their academic staff can attend each Panel meeting;
- use academic experience and knowledge to contribute effectively on design matters;
- while ensuring confidentiality, use general findings of reviews in teaching.



## Edinburgh World Heritage will:

- attend meetings where projects to be reviewed are in the World Heritage Site or are likely to have a significant upon it
- ensure that 1 member of their professional staff can attend such Panel meetings;
- ensure their representative will provide advice which could reasonably be expected to be reflective of the views of Edinburgh World

Heritage albeit without prejudice to any later view of Edinburgh World Heritage.

Landscape Institute  
Scotland

**The Landscape Institute Scotland will:**

- establish a small pool of their members from which panel members can be drawn and ensure that 1 of their members can attend each Panel meeting;
- refresh approximately a third of this pool on a yearly basis to ensure that there is a degree of continuity which is balanced by new voices being brought to the Panel;
- ensure that Panel members are well respected within their profession, have a track record in achieving high quality design and are able to communicate effectively and objectively their view on design matters.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND

**Historic Scotland will:**

- ensure that 1 member of their professional staff can attend each Panel meeting;
- ensure their representative will provide advice which could reasonably be expected to be reflective of the views of Historic Scotland albeit without prejudice to any later view of Historic

Scotland;

- provide advice about any relevant matters relating to the historic environment affected by development.



**Police Scotland will:**

- ensure that 1 member of their Police liaison service can attend each Panel meeting;
- ensure their representative will provide advice which could reasonably be expected to be reflective of the views of Police Scotland albeit without prejudice to any later view of Lothian and Borders Police;
- provide advice about any relevant matters relating to building security affected by the urban design of the development;



**The RTPI in Scotland will:**

- establish a small pool of their members from which a Panel member can be drawn and ensure that 1 of their members can attend each Panel meeting;
- ensure that Panel members are well respected

within their profession, have a track record in achieving high quality design and are able to communicate effectively and objectively their view on design matters.



**The School of the Built Environment at Heriot Watt University will:**

- ensure that 1 member of their academic staff can attend each Panel meeting;
- use academic experience and knowledge to contribute effectively on design matters;
- while ensuring confidentiality, use general findings of reviews in teaching.



**The Transport Research Institute at Napier University will:**

- ensure that 1 member of their academic staff can attend each Panel meeting;
- use academic experience and knowledge to contribute effectively on design matters;
- while ensuring confidentiality, use general findings of reviews in teaching.

# Procedures for Council Officials

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## **The chair will:**

- be a staff member of the Council's Planning service.
- provide a facilitatory role to focus the Panel's discussion upon providing advice upon the proposals being reviewed;
- decide on the proposals to be reviewed;
- invite architects, planners and developers to present revised proposals if a subsequent review is considered likely to have significant benefit to the design development;
- advise presenters to ensure that they are providing relevant information for review;
- broadly set out the themes raised in the discussion and indicate the extent to which it is considered action is required;
- arrange external contacts with organisations, including the media;
- provide feedback on how projects have developed since being reviewed by the Panel.

## **The secretariat will:**

- be a staff member of the Council's Planning service;
- arrange the Panel's meeting places and times;
- liaise with architects, planners and developers to establish the type of information that should be provided prior to the panel meeting and for the panel meeting;
- request presenters to provide issues papers on

- their proposals 8 days in advance of the panel meeting to ensure that this information can be issued to Panel members one week in advance;
- ensure a short summary of the planning issues surrounding the proposals if necessary is provided;
- sum up the detailed findings of the review and seek a consensus on the weight to be ascribed to any issues if necessary;
- prepare and issue a draft Panel report 3 working days after the Panel meeting to ensure that agreement can be reached upon it within 2 weeks of the Panel's meeting;
- Include in the written advice any declarations of interest that have been made and any decisions relating to such declarations;
- amend the draft report to reflect any additional comments made by Panel members;
- advise the chair on matters of remit, functions, roles and procedures;
- on behalf of the Panel, issue the formal advice of the panel to the architects, developers and planners;
- ensure the Panel's website is kept up to date.
- liaise with A+DS service to agree projects that will be engaged with via the Design Forum service.

## **Planning officials should:**

- ensure architects, developers and consultant

- planners are made aware of the potential for their project to be reviewed;
- provide a pre meeting paper which sets out the planning context for the proposal being considered. This should highlight in particular any relevant design policies or issues, particularly where the proposal may be contrary to any policy;
- ensure that this is provided no later than 8 days in advance of the meeting;
- provide a concise presentation on the planning issues and note that this should normally last for no more than 5 minutes;
- remain for the duration of the Panel's discussion to hear the views expressed;
- encourage the design team to consider, reflect and take into account the advice provided in the development of the design;
- ensure that the Panel's report is added to the public record of the planning application;
- Set out how the Panel's comments have been addressed in any relevant planning report.

# Procedures for presenters

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**To ensure that Panel members have a full understanding of the design issues raised by their proposals, architects, consultant planners and developers should:**

- provide pdf versions of A3 landscape format booklets which illustrate the design concept and, to scale, context, plans, sections, elevations. In addition, other relevant material such as 3 dimensional views alongside a concise narrative should be provided. This should be set out in accordance with the pro forma;
- provide a summary of the project information including, names of clients, consultants, key players and consultees, estimated project cost and procurement method, and size of site;
- ensure that this visual and written information is provided no later than 8 days in advance of the meeting;
- note that the Council cannot accept emails greater than 3MB in size and allow for delivery of CD copies of the information if it is not possible to email it by 1 week in advance of the meeting;
- provide at the Panel meeting hard copies of folded scale drawings at a size no greater than A1 which clearly illustrate the proposals and surrounding context;
- ensure / encourage their clients to attend Panel reviews;
- provide a concise presentation using Power-Point which sets out the rationale for the design including its concept and development in an appropriate timescale and note that for most presentations, this will be around **10 minutes**;
- remain for the duration of the Panel's discussion to hear the views expressed;
- consider, reflect and take into account the advice provided in the development of the design;
- provide a statement with the planning application on how the advice provided by the Panel has been addressed.

# Definitions

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**Locally Significant Development (A+DS category):** This is development that would significantly change the character of large area of the city through its scale or because of the sensitivity of the environment upon which the change is proposed. Examples of this type of development would be for master plans for more than 500 dwellings and major developments within areas of great landscape value.

Locally Significant Development will not be reviewed by the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel but instead will be referred to Architecture and Design Scotland and their Design Forum service.

**Significant Development:** This is considered to be development which is significant because of its scale or location. For example a tenement infill in the city centre or on an arterial route may be considered major because of its prominence whereas a development of a similar scale in an industrial area may not. Significant development may also be that which involves a significant departure from the development plan / finalised plan or that which raises issues not adequately covered by the development plan / finalised plan. If the degree of public interest in a proposal is likely to be substantial, this would indicate that the proposal would be significant. Discretion will be used by the secretariat in selecting such proposals for review.

**Complex Development:** This is considered to be development which has complex issues surrounding it such sensitivity due to location or a complex programme of functional requirements, for example a school. Discretion will be used by the secretariat in selecting such proposals for review.

**Projects which set new standards:** These are considered to include projects which create a new typology of building or architecture or one which is unusual to the Edinburgh context. Discretion will be used by the secretariat in selecting such proposals for review.

**Building types which, if repeated, would have a cumulative impact:** These are considered to include projects which, individually may not have a significant impact on the quality of the built environment, however if large numbers of them are built could have a significant impact.