Minutes of Glasgow Urban Design Panel

Thursday 22nd August 2007 – 9:30am

1.In attendance:

Alistair McDonald	*Glasgow City Council*
Gerry Grams	*Glasgow City Council*
Geoffrey Jarvis	*Glasgow Architecture Committee*
Pauline Megson	*Historic Scotland*
Ombretta Romice	*University of Strathclyde*
Guy Pettigrew	*New Glasgow Society*
Neil Perrit	*Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*
James Spence Watson	*Landscape Institute*
Nick Barley	*The Lighthouse*
Murray Russell	*Glasgow Institute of Architects*
David Hasson	*Glasgow Institute of Architects*
Niall Murphy	*Pollokshields Heritage*
David Grierson	*University of Strathclyde*
Douglas Pritchard	*Mackintosh School of Architecture*
Jim Dick	*Glasgow Institute of Architects*
Karin Currie	*Pollokshields Heritage*
Roger Guthrie	*Alexander Greek Thomson Society*
Angela Williams	*Architecture + Design Scotland*

Apologies:

Angus Kerr	*Glasgow Institute of Architects / Glasgow Architecture Committee*
Alex Adamson	*Scottish Civic Trust*
Liz Davidson	*Merchant City Townscape Heritage*
Betty Sneddon	*Old Glasgow Club*
Dr Steve Tiesdell	*Urban Design, Glasgow University*
Peter Trowles	*Glasgow School of Art*
Gill Stewart	*Glasgow Building Preservation Trust*
Rob Hay	*Strathclyde Police*

2.Matters arising:

3.Previous minute: General discussion over responsibility for the minutes and the timescale within which the reports and conclusion were produced after the meeting.

4.Proposal: Maryhill Locks
Application Ref: Pre application
Architect: Elder and Cannon
Address: Maryhill Locks
Presented by: Gary Watt, ISIS
and Johnny Togneri, Elder and Cannon

The presentation was introduced by Gary Watt of ISIS and expounded upon by Johnny Togneri of Elder and Cannon.

The proposal is for a masterplan to steer redevelopment of the area around the 5 Maryhill locks on the Forth and Clyde Canal between the Kelvin Aqueduct, the former Maryhill Cross, and taking in the graving duck where the Clyde Puffers where built.

The proposal is a joint masterplan with Glasgow Housing Association and Maryhill Housing Association and also has input from developers such as Bellway Homes.
The masterplanned area will contain between 700 – 800 houses of mixed tenures, community uses and shops, with cafés and leisure to promote activity along the canal. The layout of the new streets will promote safe neighbourhoods. All the interwar housing in this area has now been demolished so other than the canal, and one remaining tower block, the site is a tabula rasa. The design team noted that their design had to take cognisance of the challenging topography, as well as views, across the site.

The team also noted the difficulties inherent in fitting the masterplan around the circular locks of the canal basin which is a scheduled ancient monument. They commented that while Historic Scotland has encouraged the use of organic shapes within the vicinity of the locks (to complement their geometries) they have also requested that any built form steps away from these features. The design guidance by JM Architects for the canal corridor as it passes through North Glasgow also indicated that the locks should be signified with landmark buildings.

The team commented on the through community consultation and A+DS reviews to date. They have emphasised mix of tenure, public space, security, canal activity, and the history of the area. Particular regard has been paid to movement, views, and spaces with an emphasis on the following:

- A major civic space at the junction of Maryhill and Cowal Road.
- Links to The Kelvin Riverside park and corridor
- Promotion of mooring activity at the White House bar
- Use of terraces around the canal locks
- Formation of a new canal street
- Community spaces located through out development.

There are three neighbourhoods with distinct characters across the site:

- A Hilltop neighbourhood with a beaux arts axial quality of 2 – 3 storey terraces following the contours of the hill.
- Grouping of 6 – 7 storey buildings around Maryhill Cross to help redefine the containment of the urban space
- 3 storey terraces of housing linking between the canal and the Kelvin.

With regards to the architectural character of these neighbourhoods the design team have been influenced by Homes for the Future, Reiach and Hall's work at St Vincent Place Edinburgh, and the work of West 8 at Java and Borneo islands in Amsterdam's docklands.

The team commented that Collective Architecture is currently working up lighting proposals for the site with emphasis on the following:

- Gateways into the site, in particular the Kelvin Aqueduct at Maryhill Road
- Highlighting 'Walls' of trees
- Perforating the wall to Maryhill Road to promote views across the canal basin and locks.

The proposal was met with a series of questions from, and debate amongst, the panel with particular regard to the relationship between building form and landscape and how the new terraces addressed the canal.

A report on the Glasgow Urban Design Panel's after presentation discussion and review session is appended to this minute.

5.Proposal: Hotel Development
Application Ref: XXXXXX
Agent: Jenkins and Marr
Architect: SMC Jenkins and Marr
Address: Bothwell Street
Presented by: John Paton of McInally Associates and Craig Dunn of SMC Jenkins and Marr

Prior to the presentation Alistair McDonald noted that the Bothwell Plaza planning application had been lodged with Glasgow City Council on 21st August so the presentation would not be pre-application as noted in the agenda.

The presentation was introduced by John Paton of McInally Associates and expounded upon by Craig Dunn of SMC Jenkins and Marr.

This is a key city centre site and the proposal is for the redevelopment of the entire city block, bounded by Bothwell, Pitt, Waterloo and Douglas Street. The site is currently occupied by the Holiday Inn podium and slab tower. The developers feel the current level of accommodation on the site is inefficient and it was noted that the hotel building no longer meets hotel accommodation standards for its class and is obsolete.

The replacement complex more than trebles the current accommodation as a mixed use development comprising:

- 16 storey Crowne Plaza hotel and Conference centre with 300 4 star plus bedrooms and a function suite capable of accommodating 1000 people
- 16 storey Express by Holiday Inn with 275 3 star bedrooms
- 13 Storey office building providing circa 160,000sqft of Grade A space with large open plan floor plates of approximately 11,800sqft.

The proposal is for these three uses to be accommodated within an interlocking 'U' shaped building that defines a north facing plaza addressing Bothwell Street. The plaza is formed on the roof of a 2 storey plinth containing the function suite, ancillary accommodation, and car parking. The main entrances for all three buildings are accessed via this plaza while the main entrance to the function suite is located on Pitt Street.

It was noted by the agents that the proposal responded to the scale of the Western fringe of the city centre rather than the Victorian core. It was also noted that the design team had chosen to place the service entrances to the three buildings on Waterloo Street. The design team acknowledged the lack of active frontage addressing Waterloo Street at ground level but attempted to overcome this by locating the Express by Holiday Inn restaurant, with an external terrace, on the second floor level overlooking the street. The design team also commented that in their opinion, within this area of the city centre, Waterloo Street operated as more of service street than a principle thoroughfare.

The proposal was met with a series of questions from the panel with particular regard, and concern, as to how the proposal worked within the urban context; how it addressed the surrounding streets; its scale and massing; the quality of materials; and how the north facing plaza would work in practice.

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6.Proposal: Update on Regeneration of BBC Scotland HQ
Application Ref: XXXXX
Agent: Comprehensive Design Architects
Address: Queen Margaret Drive
Presented by: Ken Clark, Development and Regeneration Services

Ken Clark of Development and Regeneration Services tabled drawings of the current proposal for the former BBC Scotland Headquarters site on Queen Margaret Drive for the panel's perusal and comment. The design has evolved further to ongoing discussions between Development and Regeneration Services and Comprehensive Design Architects.

The panel noted that other than nuance the masterplan remains as previously tabled. The main changes to the scheme concern evolution of detail and amendments to building heights. In particular Block C, when viewed from Queen Margaret Drive, has been lowered to take cognisance of its skyline impact on the site's tree belt. The

relationship of the new build element to Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Queen Margaret College has been rethought with the height of Block A being reduced out of respect for its listed neighbour. The panel noted the increased horizontal emphasis in the proposed elevations.

In conclusion the panel acknowledge incremental improvements in the design of the proposal. However, it was also noted that several areas of concern the panel had previously raised at an earlier presentation had still to be addressed. Consequently the panel request a further review of the proposals with the architects present.

7. AOCB

Geoffrey Jarvis (Glasgow Architecture Committee) raised the issue Glasgow City Council's decision to award a 99 year ground lease to G1 Group on the back of accepting their proposal to rebuild James Miller's Botanics Station as a café and conference incorporating a nightclub in railway tunnel as the only viable option for inserting a café within the Botanic Gardens. GJ(GAC) noted that this decision did not take cognisance of servicing, or car parking issues and local opinion that the top of Byres Road was rapidly being overdeveloped with leisure and entertainment facilities to the detriment of amenity. GJ(GAC) queried how it was possible for DRS officials to examine a planning application for this objectively given that the Council executive would have a conflict of interest with regards to the financial aspect of the proposal?

AM(DRS) noted that the decision to award the lease had now been referred to Glasgow City Council's Land and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee. He also noted that anything tabled would have to be assessed against policy framework and would also have to go out to consultation i.e. there was whole process to go through before the scheme was taken to planning.

GJ(GAC) noted that if other panel members shared his concerns about this proposal they should write to Councillor Euan McLeod Convenor of Glasgow City Council's Land and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Mary Paris Scottish Liberal democrat councillor for Maryhill / Kelvin ward.

David Hasson (GIA) noted Jude Barber of Collective Architects had been asked to join the panel by the GIA.

8. Date of next meeting: 4th October 2007.