# Minutes of Glasgow Urban Design Panel

Thursday 31st May 2007 – 9:30am

1.In attendance:

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| *Alistair McDonald* | *Glasgow City Council* | |
| *Gerry Grams* | *Glasgow City Council* | *(in part)* |
| *Geoffrey Jarvis* | *Glasgow Architecture Committee* | |
| *Rob Hay* | *Strathclyde Police* | |
| *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* | |
| *Peter Trowles* | *Glasgow School of Art* | |
| *Niall Murphy* | *Pollokshields Heritage* | |
| *Gill Stewart* | *Glasgow Building Preservation Trust* | *(in part)* |
| *David Grierson* | *University of Strathclyde* | |
| *Dr Steve Tiesdell* | *Urban Design, Glasgow University* | |
| *Douglas Pritchard* | *Mackintosh School of Architecture* | |

Apologies:

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| *Angus Kerr* | *Glasgow Institute of Architects / Glasgow Architecture Committee* |
| *Jim Dick* | *Glasgow Institute of Architects* |
| *Karin Currie* | *Pollokshields Heritage* |
| *Roger Guthrie* | *Alexander Greek Thomson Society* |
| *Alex Adamson* | *Scottish Civic Trust* |
| *Liz Davidson* | *Merchant City Townscape Heritage* |
| *Angela Williams* | *Architecture + Design Scotland* |
| *Betty Sneddon* | *Old Glasgow Club* |

2.Matters arising:

3.Previous minute: approved

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| 4.Proposal: | New Hillhead Primary School. |
| Application Ref: | Pre application |
| Architect: | JM Architects |
| Address: | Gibson Street, Hillhead |
| Presented by: | Henry McKeown, JM Architects |

Henry McKeown outlined the presentation for this new primary school on a site bounded by Gibson Street, the River Kelvin, and Kelvingrove Park. The new school has been formed from a proposed amalgamation of 4 separate Primary schools. The resultant school would have a role of 666 pupils. Demographic and traffic impact studies are currently being carried out. It is likely that most pupils will come on foot but the design team are aware that traffic and congestion could be an issue.

In urban design terms the main issues to consider are:

1. How to respond to the grain and density of Gibson Street with both its tenemental scale and the neighbouring Victorian churches.
2. How to address Kelvingrove Park.

The resultant building effectively spans between these two conditions. Due to traffic-engineering requirements it has been decided to place the main pupil entrance with associated vehicular drop off on Kelvin Way. Gibson Street is addressed with a greater community presence by set back placing of the games and assembly halls overlooking a podium play area. The architects emphasised that this area was not a public square but it could on occasion become a public event space for community festivals. The classrooms are then placed to the south behind the larger scale community element in an 'L' shaped green roof covered wing bounded by the River Kelvin and arranged along a single circulation corridor. This overlooks a courtyard space that the main pupil entrance is then located off.

The following questions were raised by the panel and answers supplied by the design team:

Q1 (L.I): Can the team clarify which area have been set aside as being for play or informal play?
Q2 (LH): Not clear from presentation how much time has been spent on play areas.
A: The design team have prioritised the internally planning of the school to make sure the scheme worked. They are currently working on maximising play space and feasibility.
Q3 (HS): Kelvingrove Park is on the inventory of landscapes. As half of the school site is within the confines of the park an assessment of the impact will be required.
Q4 (SP): Noted that the Architectural Liaison Officer's report on the school is currently being prepared. How will the design team mitigate against vandalism, and how are they progressing with working through Cullen report issues?
A: The site must be secure. Lockdown will occur at 9.00pm except for the space facing onto Gibson Street.
Q4 (AHSS): Noted that this supervised area facing onto Gibson street is raised from the pavements surrounding it and is bounded by a wall. What type of elevation will be presented to passing pedestrians?
A: The idea is that you will not be able to see children's heads.
A (GCC): Design team examining the idea that this could be an interactive wall for arts groups and that the content of the wall could be symbolic for the local community.
Q5 (UoS): Encouraged to see priority given on environmentally friendly issues such as the green roof. Had the design team also looked at wider sustainability issues such as limits on energy use and resources?
A: Whitby Bird engineers are part of the design team so the environmental approach is not a bolt on. The intention is to have natural ventilation for the classrooms. To assist with this there is a double vented wall to the corridor which incorporates a ventilation chimney. The team is also looking at insulation, micro-renewables, drainage, incorporation of a solar shading ledge to all south facing classrooms, green roof to minimise surface water run off, utilising the Kelvin river as a heat sink, and to reuse grey water on the more urban part of the scheme. The dsign team are actively trying to embed the building into the location.
Q6 (UoG): There is an architectural scale issue with small scale being inserted into large. The design team need to get this relationship right but the emphasis on horizontals reinforces this sense of low scale. Did this work? Also if the new buildings were depicted in their true colours will the scale still seem right? In addition the relationship of the assembly and games hall to the gable of the Victorian church, which façade is more dominant?
A: The building attempts to deal with both scales. It is a question of townscape and balance.
(UoG): The transition of scales is the challenge.
Q7 (LI): How will the building be constructed without destroying the existing riverbank landscaping?
A: Difficult to comment. If the site requires to be adjusted then we will do so.
Q8 (GAC): Queried loss of green space in Kelvingrove Park
A: This part of the school's site is predominantly hard surface for Land Services Parks depot at present.

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked Henry McKeown for his presentation.

Thereafter followed a brief discussion between the Urban Design Panel and members of DRS:

Q1 (LI): The relocation of the depot is quite important to the application.
A (DRS): Technically this is green space therefore this has to be determined in accordance with the development plan. Part of the proposal is also the upgrading of a pitch in Kelvingrove Park

Q2 (GAC): Queried if this was compensation. The pitch should be regenerated anyway.
A (DRS): The depot is largely tarmac at present so the school is actually an improvement.
Q3 (GIA): What is the material palette?
A (DRS): The diagram is still settling down. The elevations are being worked on at present.
Q4 (NGS): Does this comply with conditions of grant of land for Kelvingrove park to Glasgow City Council?
A (DRS): There is no legal position on this.
(NGS): Expressed surprise at this.
Q5 (GSA): What about security of the riverbank with children playing adjacent to it? There was a life safety issue here.
(SP): noted that Strathclyde Police's Architectural Liaison Officer was addressing this currently.

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

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| **5.Proposal:** | Erection of Office Complex, at former Odeon Cinema to be known as the Paramount Building |
| **Application Ref:** | 07/01485/DC |
| **Agent:** | GVA Grimley |
| **Architect:** | Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects |
| **Address:** | Renfield Street/ West Regent Street/West Nile Street |
| **Presented by:** | Gordon Murray of Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects |
| **With assistance from:** | Reiner Novak of Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects |

Gordon Murray outlined the presentation for this new office block on the old Odeon cinema site bounded by Renfield Street, West Regent Street, and West Nile Street, with assistance from Reiner Novak of Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects.

Gordon Murray noted that the scheme had previously been presented to the Glasgow Urban Design panel in November 2006.Reiner Novak gave a brief synopsis of the previous presentation and how the design had developed since. GM+AD noted that though the building was in the Central Conservation Area there was no homogeneity in either architectural expression or heights of buildings in the surrounding streets.

The design team had paid close attention to both city centre view corridors and surrounding building datums. They noted the increased building heights of both the consented RMJM design for the replacement Standard Life building on the opposite side of West Regent Street and the ADF design for the block between Buchanan and West Nile Street that would terminate the axis of West Regent Street. Together with the GM+AD proposal these buildings would form a cluster of relatively high rise buildings in this area of the city centre.

The early scheme with the office floor plates gradually rotating off the city centre grid had been abandoned. However the idea of the memory veil respecting the mass of the old cinema auditorium had been retained and refined. The atrium void contained by the veil is articulated with cantilevered 'pod' like extensions to the office floor space. The tower element has been simplified though a sculptural two-floor cantilever had been introduced over the retained art deco cinema element.

The architects had wanted to explore the idea of layering and how the building could dissolve into the sky. The veil has the double function of both signifying memory and shielding / screening the office space from the noise of the buses at the West Regent Street terminus. The double skin façade of the office tower would incorporate integral solar shading. The cores of the office tower on the south elevation were not expressed rather they were suppressed behind the curtain wall. The position of the cores assisted the solar shading of the building.

The architects had been influenced by Toyo Ito's Sendai Mediatheque, and both the new extension to MOMA by Yoshio Taniguchi and Loius Vutton store by Jun Aoki in Manhattan.

Q1 (AHSS): Noted how the RMJM scheme opposite refilled the site.

Q2 (UoG): Noted the 25m setback from Renfield Street , what was the setback to West Nile Street?
A: There was a 41/2m setback.
Q3 (GIA) The memory veil was set out with columns. Can these be closed off?
A: No the architects wanted this area to be permeable.
Q4 (UoS): Agreed. This area has to be public realm.
A: Also agreed. This public space was only sheltered from the elements not tempered.
Q5 (GAC): How is memory veil terminated?
A: It stops short of the office entrance off West Nile Street.
Q6 (LH): How was the veil to be kept clean? Would this be straightforward?
A: Yes.
Q7 (GAC): How about patterns on the glazing?
A: There were essentially three layers. The first pattern was on the memory veil, the second pattern were on the projecting boxes, then the glazing on the office building was clear.
Q8 (GAC): How high is the building? Has it increased in height over the previous scheme?
Q9 (HS) Seconded this. The impact of the height increase was immediate. It had grown in size from the previous scheme.
A: The team had looked at a variety of options. The developer also noted that they had looked at different heights and volumes and had worked with a commercial team in parallel on the commerciality of the scheme to make sure that a quality result was achieved.
Q10 (NGS): What is plot ratio?
A: Probably greater than 9:1.
Q11 (UoS): Question to the developer. Could public realm be extended further i.e. the height and scale and other aspects, not just the streetscape and increasing public access but also the image of the building?
Q12 (GAC) interjected: same with regard to artwork and the buildings public presence?
A: Difficult….the team are working on the artwork / public presence as part of the six cities festival currently.
Q13 (GIA): In the previous presentation there were images of the art deco building but these seem to have been omitted.
A: It was just a question of time for the presentation.
Q14 (UoS): Glasgow's retail streets are not near the site and this site previously had a cinema on it. The nearest open space is Royal Exchange Square. Could more public space be made here by perhaps escalating the ground and first floor retail space?
A: the idea was to enhance the street particularly with the bus stops opposite.
Q15(LH): Lighting of memory veil important to prevent anti social behaviour in locale.
A: Agree.

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked Gordon Murray, Reiner Novak and Bruc Hayre for the presentation. Thereafter followed a brief discussion between the Urban Design Panel and members of DRS:

Q1 (UoG): Plot ratio more like 10:1. Appear to want bonus for public realm and conservation issues. Where GCC happy about plot ratio?
A (DRS): Thought plot ratio had been removed from the new City Plan. Building line was now considered more important.
Q2(GAC): Expressed concern about this.
Q3 (PH): Expressed concern over reliance on manifestations for architectural effect. Potentially could lack durability. Also was puzzled how a building that relied on such an extensive glazed curtain wall, even if it was double skinned, could possibly comply with SPP6?

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

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| **6.Proposal:** | Erection of Hotel |
| **Application Ref:** | 07/00688 |
| **Agent:** | Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects |
| **Address:** | 236 – 246 Clyde Street |
| **Presented by:** | Chris Malcolm of Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects |

Chris Malcolm of Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects outlined the presentation for this proposed hotel on Clyde Street. The site has prior consent for a GM+AD residential building. Like the earlier consented proposal the new building acknowledges both the RMJM Custom House Quay scheme and Alexander Kirkland's Carlton Place Suspension bridge as well as GM+AD's adjacent Unicorn Building. The new proposal takes its cue from both art deco imagery (such as the work of Raymond Hood) and in particular August Perret's apartment block at 25 Rue Franklin, Paris. The team have looked carefully at massing studies for the new building and springing points for setbacks. These setbacks will bring light and air to the surrounding streets. The idea is that the tower starts as a solid base and becomes lighter and more transparent as it ascends.

The following questions were raised by the panel and answers supplied by the design team:

Q1 (GSA): Is the building on axis with the suspension bridge or not?
A: No it's just off axis.
Q2 (AHSS): With regret must offer congratulations. Note the loss of the townhouses but a better sculptural form has resulted.
Q3 (U of S): Echoed previous comments. Expressed concern regarding the gables
Q4 (U of G): Commendable handling of scale. Should towers be expressed more clearly? At present they still read as a terrace.
Q5 (GBPT): Mentioned previous consent but the building is in a conservation area. Have the team applied for conservation area consent?
A: Yes they have applied but they already have consent for the demolition of the townhouses to the east. GM+AD noted that the buildings have been radically altered to the rear and that there are no interiors left. The team have carried out a condition report which notes structural concerns. Retention and refurbishment are not considered economical.
Q6 (HS): Noted no consent and that the interiors are not a factor as such. It is the townscape merit of the terrace that is important.
Q7 (PH) Interested in expressive qualities of the tops of the towers as a skyline feature. Could this be further explored? Where the architects aware of the work of Bing Thom Architects in Vancouver? In particular the crystalline top of Bing Thom's Georgia project tower fragments may prove a useful precedent. Also the base seems confusing. The architects noted that they wanted the tower to ascend from mass to lightness but the base incorporated large expanses of glass which undermined this. Perhaps Richard Norman Shaw's Edwardian Piccadilly Hotel in London and how the shop fronts are handled in the solid base with a colonnade marking a roof top terrace could serve as a model here?

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked Chris Malcolm for his presentation. Thereafter followed a brief discussion between the Urban Design Panel and members of DRS:

Q1. (NGS) Why not use the townhouse facades to front a new public space onto the river?
A. (DRS) The existing riverside public realm currently failing.
Q2. (GBPT) Facadism is note required. The buildings are sound and could be re-used.
A. (DRS) Noted the consent for demolition of the adjacent townhouses as part of the Unicorn application.
Q3. (GBPT) A general debate is required about this. There are few Georgian buildings left in Glasgow and this will reduce the remaining stock yet further. The more the city erodes the less clear links there are to issues like slavery of which this townhouse is a product.
Q4. (GAC): Conservationist at heart but, the though the Unicorn is a dreadful intrusion, this new building makes sense.

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

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| **7.Proposal:** | Erection of Pedestrian / Cycle bridge, linking Broomielaw and Tradeston |
| **Architects:** | Dissing + Weitling |
| **Application Ref:** | 07/01349/DC |
| **Agent:** | Halcrow |
| **Address:** | Broomielaw |
| **Presented by:** | Paul Jenson, Dissing + Weitling |

Paul Jenson of Dissing + Weitling outlined the presentation for this proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge connecting the two banks of the Clyde between the Broomielaw and Tradeston. The proposal is the replacement for the Richard Rodgers Tradeston pedestrian bridge that was won as the result of an invited competition in 2004 but was cancelled in early 2006 as a result of increased costs.

The new proposed pedestrian bridge is the result of the winning bid of a design consortium lead invitation to tender process run by Glasgow City Council in mid 2006.

Paul Jenson stated that the design was a response to the local environment. The design team felt that the location called for a low-key solution that was not too dramatic and dominant. The team also had to resolve disabled access arrangements given changes in level between both banks of the river. To complicate matters the brief had also stipulated that the bridge was not to spring off the existing north bank quay wall whereas this was possible on the south bank due to the Tradeston quay wall having to be rebuilt as part of the quay wall improvements. Consequently there were two ways to solve the problem either by increasing the height or the length of the bridge. Hence the 'S' shape of the adopted bridge solution.

The reinforced piers of the new bridge are built to withstand the impact of a small ship. The 'S' shaped steel spine of the bridge connects the two piers.

The design team also felt that, as people would be walking across the bridge it was important to consider the detailing of the bridge, as it would be clearly visible. Consequently the architects had spent time developing the balustrade detailing in particular as they wanted to mitigate the impact of the 1100mm balustrade level requirement which could interfere with eye level views. This had led to an asymmetrical 'Y' shaped balustrade with secondary handrail for wheelchair users. This aluminium section handrail would incorporate built in lighting.

The following questions were raised by the panel and answers supplied by the design team:

Q1 (LH): To what extent is the bridge spine and piers shaped by engineering or aesthetic considerations?
A (D+W): The two are the same.
Q2 (GAC): Could the arrow headed towers surmounting the piers be made lighter?
A (D+W): Obviously this had been explored but the design team felt the bridge would loose the character they were looking for.
(GAC): As result of the arrow shaped profile the bridge looks clumsy in profile.
Q3. (Uof S): Could the material of the towers be clarified. In some perspectives they appear highly reflective in others not?
A (D+W): The finish would be matt. A metallic finish would be difficult to paint and to maintain.
Q4 (U of G): It looks like a different bridge from different angles. Will you perceive the curvature three-dimensional effect?
A (D+W): This is an illusion you will perceive the three dimensionality.
Q5 (GAC): Is the air draft the same as the Richard Rodgers bridge?
A (D+W): Yes.
Q6 (SP): The matt surface of the towers can be easily graffitied. How will this be overcome?
A (Halcrow): This is the same issue as on the Clyde Arc.
Q7 (PH): What is happening with the public realm either side of the bridge. Does this form part of the application?
A(Halcrow): The intention is for an upgrade only utilising granite setts etc.
(PH) Expressed concern that in place of the Richard Rodgers plans the design of the Broomielaw public realm is secondary to civil engineering requirements. What is the overall vision for the Broomielaw waterfront now? Was there still an intention to erect riverside café pavilions as had previously been proposed?
A(DRS): Noted that this was still the intention but that it did not form part of this application.
Q6 (GAC): How would dredging of the upper Clyde be dealt with?
A (DRS): A smaller vessel would be required to deal with the 5.4m maximum clearance above mean high water level.
Q7 (HS): Felt that the tabled bridge was elegant. (PH seconded this)

(DRS) noted that a bridge between Anderston and Springfield Quay was also part GCC programme for the Clyde but awaited capital funding.
(NGS) noted that Glaswegian's will love this bridge.

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked Paul Jenson for his presentation.

Thereafter followed a brief discussion between the Urban Design Panel and members of DRS:

(LH) Not convinced that that the bridge would be as diminutive and light as design team maintain. If the design team had been looking for a low-key non-signature anti-icon bridge then they had failed to deliver. The bridge might give the appearance of being effortless when seen from the south bank looking towards the Broomielaw but when viewed downstream from the city centre as a result of the arrow headed towers its profile looked very prominent and heavy handed.

Both (GAC) and (Uof G) concurred with this opinion.

The panel then discussed how the bridge proposal had resulted from the consortium led invitation to tender process and how this was cost rather than design driven. They queried of DRS if it would be possible to review the other bridge designs submitted as part of the process? Part of the panel felt that after the strong emphasis and promotion of design in the previous Tradeston bridge proposal, what was being tabled now was disappointing.

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

## 8. AOCB

University of Strathclyde noted that invitations for their Paperspace degree show had been tabled and that pamphlets had been left for the Urban Design Panel's perusal.

Pollokshields Heritage queried when the Glasgow e-planning portal would be available?

Alistair MacDonald (DRS) noted that due to ongoing legal issues with the web service provider this had not been launched in April as previously indicated.

Pollokshields Heritage queried if the City Plan 2 training meeting for amenity societies noted in the previous minutes for the 12th May had occurred as PH had not received an invitation. Post minute note DRS gave a presentation on the new City Plan to the Glasgow Conservation forum on 5th June.

Alistair MacDonald (DRS) noted that the Glasgow Urban Model had been launched and that it formed part of the Six Cities Design festival with an exhibit in the Merchant City.

Alistair MacDonald (DRS) also noted the date of the next GUDP meeting on 12th July. Given that this was in the holiday season Alistair was keen to know if people would let DRS know of their availability as the meeting could be moved if necessary. *Post minute note the date of the next meeting has been amended to 22nd August 2007.*

**9. Date of next meeting:** 22nd August 2007.