Minutes of Glasgow Urban Design Panel

Thursday 8th March 2007 – 9:30am

1. In attendance:

Alistair McDonald	*Glasgow City Council*
Gerry Grams	*Glasgow City Council*
Rob Hay	*Strathclyde Police*
Pauline Megson	*Historic Scotland*
Roger Guthrie	*Alexander Greek Thomson Society*
James Spence Watson	*Landscape Institute*
Guy Pettigrew	*New Glasgow Society*
Neil Pirrit	*Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*
Murray Russell	*Glasgow Institute of Architects*
Jim Dick	*Glasgow Institute of Architects*
Niall Murphy	*Pollokshields Heritage*
Betty Sneddon	*Old Glasgow Club*
Angus Kerr	*Glasgow Institute of Architects / Glasgow Architecture Committee*
Gill Stewart	*Glasgow Building Preservation Trust*
Angela Williams	*Architecture + Design Scotland*

Apologies:

Karin Currie	*Pollokshields Heritage*
Alex Adamson	*Scottish Civic Trust*
Peter Trowles	*Glasgow School of Art*
David Porter	*Glasgow School of Art*
Liz Davidson	*Merchant City Townscape Heritage*
Douglas Pritchard	*Mackintosh School of Architecture*
Wolfgang Sonne	*University of Strathclyde*
David Grierson	*University of Strathclyde*
Dr Steve Tiesdell	*Urban Design, Glasgow University*
Julia Fenby	*The Lighthouse*
Geoffrey Jarvis	*Glasgow Architecture Committee*

2. Matters arising: None

3. Previous minute: approved

4. Proposal:	Erection of Hotel Complex,
Application Ref:	Pre Application
Agent:	Turley Associates
Address:	Argyle Street/Robertson Street/York Street
Presented by:	Ian Simpson of Ian Simpson Architects

Ian Simpson outlined the presentation for this hotel complex on a site bonded by Argyle Street, Robertson Street, and York Street with occasional commentary from Charles Price of PPC Developments and Ernest Ter Horst of Ian Simpson Architects. The proposal is to create a world-class 5 star hotel comprising of a 23-storey sloping tower containing bedroom suites, crowned with a fully glazed health spa incorporating a swimming pool. The tower is dramatically raised over a planar glass podium base containing restaurant and conference facilities in two pod like structures, with additional serviced apartments and a 600 cover banqueting hall located behind an adjacent retained 'B' listed J Burnet façade dating from 1870, with a distinctive Second Empire mansard roof, at the corner of Argyle and York Streets.

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

Q1: *Had the proposal been wind tunnel tested?*
A: Yes, the proposal had been tested at BMT Fluid Mechanics and this had informed the design and modelling of the tower.
Q2: *Queried the shift in grid at the corner of Robertson and Argyle Street, should the axis of Robertson Street not be respected?*
A: The design team were keen to hear the Glasgow Urban Design Panel's opinion in this regard
Q3: *Should the tower be a catalyst for a cluster or an object in its own right?*
This lead to an interjected
Q4: *Why had the second smaller tower over the retained 'B' listed building, which had previously been presented to A+DS, been deleted?*
A: The design was still evolving and both A+DS and the design team felt the second tower was awkward. There was also the issue of the expensive engineering required to transfer loads so as to allow a large column free ballroom to be located under the second tower.
Q5: *Why were the windows in the tower flush with its skin?*
A: The design team wanted a smooth skin to the tower and did not want it expressed as a solid with holes punched into it.
Q6: *Why the façade retention of the 'B' listed building? What is to be planned behind that façade and why does it require the demolition of the existing interior?*
A: Serviced apartment suites were to be placed by the listed façade as the design team felt these respected the Victorian scale of the façade. The ballroom was located behind the serviced apartment wing. Additionally the developer noted that the new building behind the façade would be over 165% the area of the existing one.
Q7: *Why does the tower face north i.e. why is the core placed to the south?*
A: The tower relates to the grid and its position in the urban block hence why the core is placed towards the inner face of the block. Additionally the curtain wall expression is the same on all four faces of the tower i.e. the core is not expressed.
Q8: *How did the design team envision the maintenance of the tower with its sloped windows?*
A: The developer stated that the design team were concerned about energy use and were currently examining the use of self-cleaning glass.

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked the design team for their presentation. A report on the Glasgow Urban Design Panel's after presentation discussion and review session is appended to this minute.

5. Proposal:	Erection of Office Development
Application Ref:	Pre Application
Agent:	Make Architects
Address:	220 Broomielaw /McAlpine Street/Carrick Street
Presented by:	Jason McColl of Make Architects

Jason McColl of Make Architects outlined the presentation for this phased development of 389,000sqft of 'A' Grade office space in a series of three blocks rising to 11, 13, and 15 storeys respectively over a podium of underground parking at the western edge of Glasgow's International Financial Services District. The proposal replaced an existing consented Elder and Canon office development scheme that occupied the entire footprint of the site. In contrast to this the Make proposal incorporated a series of public spaces and terraces stepping back away from the river along its western edge, with retail uses facing onto them. It was hoped to promote a series of east west pedestrian links to encourage pedestrian movement across the site as had been previously suggested by both the Gordon Cullen and Holmes Partnership masterplans for the Broomielaw.

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

Q1: *Concern was expressed over the potential abuse of the open spaces by skateboarders*.
A: Make had wanted to integrate these spaces with the base of the proposed buildings and felt that with the incorporation of retail uses these would be casually surveyed.
Q2: *How is the underground car parking accessed?*

A: Make indicated that there were two ramps accessing the car parking. The intention was to have one level of basement car parking across the whole site.
Q3: *How will the podium be phased with regard to the car parking? Would the developer build it all at once or in phases?*
A: A temporary wall would be erected at the end of phase 1 part of the podium.
Q4: *What was the façade detail at ground and how was this scaled to appeal to, and interest pedestrians?*
A: The idea was for a minimally detailed glass screen that would provide minimal visual obstruction. It was hoped that pedestrians could then appreciate the colour, materiality, and detail of the walls that would make up both the rear of the retail units and the ground floor office lobbies.
Q5: *The steeping up of the buildings away from the river was to be commended as it reverses current city planning policy towards the riverside.*

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked the design team for their presentation. A report on the Glasgow Urban Design Panel's after presentation discussion and review session is appended to this minute.

6. Proposal:	Erection of Building,
Application Ref:	06/04188
Agent:	3D Architects
Address:	Wellington Street
Presented by:	Graham Feachan of 3D Architects

Graham Feachan of 3D architects outlined the presentation for this proposed 75,000-sqft office development to replace the existing 1960's Apsley House on the corner of Wellington and Cadogan Street within both the International Financial Services District and the Central outstanding conservation area. The proposed building takes the form of a tessellated glass cubic volume that would project two storeys above the neighbouring buildings:

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

Q1: *Why the use of stone at the points in the building where you want to let light in?*
A: The use of stone was to emphasise the corner cut outs that respond to the heights of the surrounding buildings
Q2: *Interested in the idea of a tessellated cube by what is the nature of the glass?*
A: Glazing options were currently being examined
Q3: *Did the glazing run from floor to ceiling or were the cills expressed?*
A: The front was entirely glazed though the design team were not sure how to express the floors as yet.
Q4: *How is solar control dealt with?*
A: The design team want a BREEAM good to excellent rating. They think they can achieve low levels of heat loss through the glazing specification.
Q5: *Are there not more likely to be problems with heat gain rather than heat loss?*
A: The team are examining this at present. The specification for the façade may have to change. Blinds for solar shading will be incorporated behind the façade.
Q6: *What about the pedestrian experience of the building? The two storey void and deep cantilever over the Wellington Street entrance appear aggressive and may be intimidating to pedestrians as it gives an impression the building is top heavy. Additionally the Cadogan street façade at ground level lacks detail and interest that could appeal to passers by. Could these two elements together suggest the building is anti-urban?*
A: The architect denied that this was the case. Their aim was to have as pure a sculptural form as possible and they had not wanted to compromise their proposal, like some of the surrounding buildings, by utilising features such as bay windows.
Q7: *What about the other two elevations to the service lane to the north and the boundary to the west? Given the buildings height you will see these from higher parts of the city centre to the north.*
A: These elevations are being explored currently
Q8: *Elevation abutment to the existing Cadogan Street building is unresolved.*

In conclusion Alistair MacDonald thanked Graham Feachan for his presentation. A report on the Glasgow Urban Design Panel's after presentation discussion and review session is appended to this minute.

7.Proposal: Demonstration of Public Access by Carla Savletta

The panel convened in the Library of the City Chambers for a demonstration on Glasgow City Council's new planning portal through which planning applications can be accessed online. This new facility can be accessed via Glasgow City Council's Planning Homepage. It can be used to search for applications by street, postcode, map, or application type. Parties will also be able to object online provided they supply a valid e-mail address. As resources are limited only applications submitted after January 2007 have their associated documents available online. The new service will be launched in April 2007.

The panel want to thank Carla Savletta for her presentation and demonstration of this new facility.

8.AOCB

Alistair MacDonald noted that the members of the Glasgow Urban Design Panel had written to Glasgow City Council concerning their policies on sustainability and tall buildings. He indicated that as Development and Regeneration Services intend to present the draft City Plan 2 to the panel at the next session it was perhaps better to leave these items until then so they could form part of the panel's discussion of the new plan. As of May 2007 the draft plan will go out for consultation for a two-month period.

9. Date of next meeting: 19th April 2007