

**A POLICY ON
ARCHITECTURE
FOR SCOTLAND**
PUBLIC CONSULTATION:
REVIEW OF POLICY

THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE'S POLICY ON ARCHITECTURE WAS PUBLISHED IN 2001, SETTING OUT 40 GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS INTENDED TO HELP RAISE AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF GOOD BUILDING DESIGN; TO PROMOTE RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE TO THE CULTURAL LIFE OF SCOTLAND; AND TO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF SCOTLAND'S BUILDINGS AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS.

CONSULTATION

Since the launch of policy, the Executive and a range of partners have made considerable progress towards meeting a significant number of our commitments. The policy document and the Executive's 2005 report on the progress which has been made to date can be found on-line at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Arts-Culture/arch/policy>.

In the recent document "Scotland's Culture", which was the Executive's response to the Cultural Commission's review of Culture in Scotland, we indicated our intention to publish a renewed architecture policy statement at the end of this year. Our original policy document also contained a commitment to periodically review our objectives and priorities, and to assess the effectiveness of actions taken. The most recent achievement has been the setting up of Architecture and

Design Scotland in April 2005 as the new independent champion for a better designed built environment. As part of the process of review, and the development of the new statement, we are now carrying out a public consultation to inform the direction which the new policy will take. We would, therefore, welcome your involvement in the consultation process. To inform our future priorities, we are seeking your views on the progress that we have made to date and also your views on how we might tackle the challenges ahead.

IMPACT OF POLICY

We would, firstly, be grateful to receive your opinions on the initiatives which we have undertaken in 2001 to 2006; what you feel are the key achievements; and where you feel that the Executive's policy might be strengthened.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

As a starting point for your considerations, we have identified what we believe are 12 key challenges for the future development of policy, and we have set out a number of questions related to these. We would also be grateful to receive your comments on broader aspects of these issues and any other areas which we have not specifically identified.

CO-ORDINATION AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

01.

Architecture policy interacts with a very wide range of other policy areas including planning, building standards, regeneration, sustainability, the historic environment, procurement, housing, health, school buildings, culture, education and local government. Through the “Designing Places” planning policy statement, for instance, design is now enshrined as a material consideration in the planning process. We have also established the Scottish Building Standards Agency (SBSA) and modernised the Building Standards System, allowing more innovative approaches to the way in which performance standards may be met through building design. Our policies are increasingly integrated or complementary but we are seeking to constantly improve our performance in this respect.

- What should be the key cross-cutting priorities for policy?
- Where and how best might we build on links between Executive policies?
- What mechanisms might we use to raise awareness of policy initiatives?

RAISING DESIGN STANDARDS AND BUILDING QUALITY

02.

The quality of Scotland's built environment is important not only to our own quality of life, but to the perception of our country abroad as an outstanding place to live, to work and to visit. It is therefore imperative that we look for ways to raise our standards of design and building quality. However, improving the quality of our built environment requires commitment from a very wide range of participants and interests. We believe that we need to engender a wider recognition that good design is the key to providing true value for money, and that we need to promote a greater awareness of the social and cultural value of a high quality built environment.

- How can we engender a greater commitment to good design across disciplines, sectors and interests?
- What further steps can the policy take to raise standards of building quality?
- How can Architecture and Design Scotland work to promote better standards of building quality?

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

03.

Scotland's policy on architecture has been underpinned by a commitment to public engagement – as evidenced by the Executive's support for a National Programme on architecture delivered by The Lighthouse over the past five years and the publication of a biennial review of Scottish architecture. The benefits of public participation in architecture is, for instance, demonstrated by the success of the recent 6000 Miles exhibition in An Tuireann, Skye, which promoted a debate leading to the proposal for a cutting-edge piece of architecture and the generation of extensive media coverage. We have also supported The Lighthouse in the development of a major digital resource, scottisharchitecture.com, to ensure that National Programme events and activities are available on-line.

➤ How can we promote a debate about spaces and places that not only engages the public but inspires them to demand better quality design?

➤ How can we further raise public aspirations for design quality and stimulate greater public involvement in practical issues affecting built environments?

➤ What steps can we take to encourage communities to become more engaged with the planning system and with new developments?

➤ How can scottisharchitecture.com be developed to open up a wider audience for architecture and design?

The Executive has agreed to support the annual Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) Doolan Award for the best building in Scotland in order to celebrate achievement and encourage excellence as well as to broaden public interest in high quality architecture.

➤ What role should awards play in raising public awareness of good architecture?

O4.

Over the past five years, the issue of place-making has emerged as an important policy consideration; moving the discussion beyond a concern for the design of individual buildings into broader issues of neighbourhood and urban design. “Designing Places” set out six qualities of successful places; identity, safe and pleasant spaces, ease of movement, a sense of welcome, adaptability and the good use of resources. The delivery of these qualities is seen as a key challenge in new development.

- How can the policy support the creation and regeneration of neighbourhoods and communities to create places with character and the successful qualities identified in “Designing Places”?
- How can we ensure that the quality of the public realm is not overlooked in new development?
- How do we maximise the potential offered to us from the historic environment?
- How can Architecture and Design Scotland work to improve the quality of place-making in Scotland?

05.

Significant investment is going into public sector building programmes across the country, and the policy on architecture has promoted good design as a key delivery mechanism in achieving value for money and sustainable development. We recognise that public sector clients can promote good architecture and design through their commissioning practices, for example through prioritising design quality in the procurement process, adopting best value (rather than lowest cost) tendering, and placing greater emphasis on whole life costs.

The Executive's Construction Procurement Manual, which is available on-line at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Planning-Building/construction>, addresses these issues in its policy and best practice guidance to clients, and now also includes a section specifically relating to Design Quality in Building Procurement.

- As the manual is intended to be reviewed and updated to reflect emerging developments or changes in legislation, are there any other issues on which you consider the Design Quality section should give further guidance?
- What further steps should public sector clients take through the procurement process to promote design excellence (without breaching procurement regulations)?
- How might Architecture and Design Scotland provide greater support and incentive for higher quality public sector design?

06.

Scotland's sustainable development strategy "Choosing Our Future" sets out an agenda aimed at changing the way in which we use resources and plan and develop services. The strategy seeks to seize the economic opportunities that sustainable development presents. Our £1.2 million "SUST: The Lighthouse on Sustainability" initiative is intended to act as a catalyst for a change in attitude on sustainable design, and to help to mainstream "green" thinking in the built environment. Through SUST, we have created a large number of resources including client education programmes, guidance and reference material on sustainable issues particular to Scotland.

- How can we further develop our strategies to mainstream sustainability into building design?
- How can we encourage and promote the recognition and adaptive re-use of Scotland's historic buildings rather than their replacement?

07.

Sir George Cox's Review of the design sector sets out the global challenges faced by our creative industries, and we need to consider how we in Scotland can tackle the issues raised in his report. Architecture is a key element of our Creative Industries. These industries generate an estimated annual turnover of £5 billion in Scotland, and architecture and design accounts for around 10% of this. Our new architecture helps to bolster Scotland's reputation abroad and contributes to growing the economy. The first 6 Cities Design Festival, which is scheduled for 2007, provides an outstanding opportunity to promote Scotland's cities as creative hubs.

- To what extent should the policy on architecture be broadened to tackle wider design-related issues?
- How can we promote the benefits of good design in its wider sense – raising awareness and understanding within the business community of the strategic importance of design?
- How can we use the power of public procurement to encourage more imaginative solutions from suppliers and thus help improve public services?
- How can we improve take-up of creative industries as a career choice?
- As Scotland's Centre for Architecture and Design, what role can The Lighthouse play to address the challenges set by the Cox Review?

INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION AND NETWORKS

08.

Over the past five years, the policy on architecture has promoted links with a number of European partners, and Scottish architecture was represented at the Venice Biennale for the first time in 2004. Design is now one of the main political priorities in South East Asia, South America, India and Australia. The international promotion of Scotland's creative capabilities has never had greater importance.

- ▶ How can we develop and strengthen the international links developed over the first five years of policy development?
- ▶ How can we strategically position Scotland as a creative nation in a way that competes with our global competitors?

RECORDING AND ARCHIVING THE BUILT HERITAGE

09.

Our buildings tell both the story of our past and our aspirations for the future. The work of Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) is vital in taking forward our policy. In recent years, RCAHMS has taken great strides forward in making its collections accessible through digital technology and facilities such as CANMORE and CANMAP, accessed through its website www.rcahms.gov.uk.

- How can we raise awareness and interest in Scotland's historic environment – one of our greatest cultural assets?
- What further steps can RCAHMS take to promote access to its collections?

10.

We believe that the historic environment should be valued as an asset, rather than thought of as a constraint in development. It can often provide a key to reinforcing the identity of communities, and it can add value in the majority of cases provided that its value is recognised at the outset and it becomes an integral part of a project.

- How can we ensure that new buildings complement and enhance Scotland's historic buildings and areas?
- What more can we do to promote the historic environment as an asset?

11.

Over the past five years, we have brought forward initiatives making it easier for architecture to be woven into the schools curriculum and to support other National Priorities for education. The Building Connections initiative and associated website, www.buildingconnections.co.uk, provides schools with practical guidance on the use of the built environment as a context for learning. The initiative brings together educational resources from organisations, individuals, schools and local authorities across Scotland.

➤ How can the Building Connections initiative be developed further to interest children and young people in architecture?

The SIX Student Awards were created as a partnership between the RIAS and our National Programme. The Awards bring a single focus to student work, giving it the highest possible public profile through exhibitions and publications.

➤ How can we best harness our wealth of student talent and our schools of architecture as a resource, having impact in the real world?

As architecture is a “knowledge” profession, the role of research is vitally important in underpinning our understanding of both technical and social issues in building design, and we have thus built a research remit into Architecture and Design Scotland’s role.

➤ How can we achieve greater dissemination and usage of research within the design process to achieve better outcomes?

12.

Scotland’s built environment will change significantly over the next 20 years and we need to be alert to the key drivers and potential issues such as climate change, energy and transport which shape those changes. It is essential that we have a robust vision for the kind of country that we want Scotland to be, and plan now for that future. We need to ensure that the quality of our built environment is central to our vision.

The Executive’s 3 key aims for development in Scotland until 2025 are:

1. increasing growth and competitiveness;
2. promoting social and environmental justice; and
3. promoting sustainable development and protecting and enhancing the quality of natural and built environments.

The Policy on Architecture has potential roles in supporting all three of these aims.

- In what ways might the policy on architecture best support these aims to take forward our aspirations for the future?
- What can we do to help ensure that what we build today is worthy to be Scotland’s heritage of tomorrow?

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This document is also available on the Scottish Executive website:
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OTHER ISSUES

We would be grateful to receive your comments on any other issues which we have not specifically identified and which you feel could be important in shaping the future development of our policy.

Please return your responses to arrive by 28 July 2006 at the latest:

1. by e-mail to:
architecture@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
2. by mail to:
Scottish Executive, Architecture Policy Unit
1-B(N) Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
3. on-line at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations>

If you do not have access to a PC, you may wish to telephone Freephone 0800 77 1234 to locate your nearest public access point.

