

April 2014

The Jersey Architecture Commission

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Minister for Planning and Environment created the Jersey Architecture Commission in 2010.
- 1.2. Members of the new Commission were appointed following a competitive interview process. The Commission brings together a wealth of expertise in architecture, planning and urban design to advise the Minister and Planning Officers on architecture and design. The present Chairman of the Commission is Andy Theobald, a practising architect and studio partner in Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios.
- 1.3. It gives independent expert guidance on major and sensitive developments in Jersey and will be an optional service available to applicants.
- 1.4. The Commission works with the Planning and Environment Department, agents and developers to promote and support the highest possible standards of design in the built environment. The Commission is available to offer advice on a variety of schemes including schemes significant in terms of their scale, schemes that are particularly sensitive in terms of their location and schemes involving heritage and conservation.
- 1.5. The Commission meets every second month to review schemes at an early stage in the development process selected by the Minister or Director of Planning and with the agreement of the applicant. There is no obligation for any applicant to see the Commission even if requested to do so by the Minister. Applicants will be invited to make a presentation to the Commission who will then issue a written report to the applicant and the Planning Department giving the guidance of the Commission. It will focus on how well the scheme relates to the principles of good design and give a series of constructive comments. The advice will then be used in the assessment process of any planning application.
- 1.6. Commissioners are required to declare any interests they may have of a financial, familial, or any other kind, which may be perceived as making them less than able to consider applications impartially. Commissioners will leave the review for the duration of the Commission's consideration of the matter where they have such an interest.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1. To provide an external independent forum for Jersey through which the promotion of good architecture and urban design which is sensitive to context can take place.
- 2.2. To provide a forum through which external views on the design of new development schemes can be obtained.
- 2.3. To work with architects and developers practising in Jersey to offer design guidance for new schemes.

3. Status

- 3.1. It is a non statutory consultee of the Planning and Environment Department and an external independent voice for architecture and design in Jersey. It will act in the public interest to foster discussion and increase the debate on good architecture on the Island.

4. Commission Make up

- 4.1. The Commission will be made up of up to ten formally-appointed Commissioners. At least three Commissioners will be called to each design review.
- 4.2. The Commissioners are representative of the following areas:
 - Experience in the field of architecture, design and heritage.
 - Current architectural practice.
 - Urban and landscape design.
- 4.3. The Commission's main link to the States of Jersey will be via the Executive Officer to the Commission who briefs and provides advice to the Commission.
- 4.4. Appointments run for between two to three years from appointment date.

5. Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest and Confidentiality

- 5.1. Commissioners currently in private practice will need to demonstrate how they will avoid any conflicts of interest. If the Commissioners' advice is to be respected its members must be demonstrably impartial. All conflicts of interest real or perceived must be recorded well in advance of each meeting. A conflict arises if there is any suggestion that any Commissioner, either as an individual or a member of a group or organisation, might have a financial, commercial or professional interest in a project, its client or its site.
- 5.2. When schemes are reviewed before the planning application stage the promoter may request a confidential review. This may be likely when a scheme is not yet public and the developer feels that publicity may damage commercial interests. Knowing that the proposals will be treated as confidential might encourage developers to seek advice early in the process, when it will be most valuable. When considering schemes that have already been submitted for planning approval, the Commission should make its advice publicly available as soon as it has been sent to the Planning Department, client or project team.

6. Chairing

- 6.1. The Commission will be chaired by a member of the Commission.
- 6.2. The Chairman will be selected by the nominated Commissioners.
- 6.3. The Chairman will approve items to be included on the agenda.
- 6.4. The Chairman will agree the final report issued to applicants.

7. Regularity of meetings/time commitment and expected outputs

- 7.1. It is envisaged that a formal meeting of the Commission will take place every two months to consider major applications referred to it. Where appropriate, and with particularly significant schemes, it is recommended that schemes are presented to the Commission in the pre-application stage.
- 7.2. Meetings will be held in private with attendance restricted to the client body, although the Commission will request officers to attend.
- 7.3. Meetings will be scheduled for one day in duration and will include up to four presentations, dependent on the complexity, sensitivity and scale of projects put forward for the meeting.
- 7.4. Additional meetings may be called if necessary and with the agreement of the Commissioners.
- 7.5. Members of the Commission will also be expected to act pro-actively for the design agenda for Jersey over and above the formal scheduled meetings. In order to do this, prospective members will need to bring an element of service in the public interest to their role.
- 7.6. These Terms of Reference will be subject to review every four years by the Minister for Planning and Environment.

8. Guidance for presentation to the Commission

Commission meetings

- 8.1. There are full meetings of the Commission every second month. The Commission with up to four members present reviews four cases (two in the morning and two in the afternoon) normally allocating one-and-a-half hours for each.
- 8.2. In exceptional circumstances the Commission will review schemes with a minimum of two members as directed by the Chairman at irregular intervals.
- 8.3. As the above implies, the Commission will often be willing to review a scheme more than once at different stages.
- 8.4. Commission meetings are not public meetings and attendance is by invitation only. They are held in St Helier and, from time to time, elsewhere.

9. Types of schemes to put forward

- 9.1. Development proposals should be put forward to the Commission that are significant because of their size or public impact, their sensitivity, because of the strategic location of the site or because they exemplify persistent design problems facing developers.

10. How schemes are put forward

- 10.1. The Commission will meet every second month and will look at schemes including commercial and residential developments, urban and rural regeneration, landscape improvements, engineering projects, heritage conservation, and cultural provision. Developers may also request that their schemes are put forward for review at cost.
- 10.2. Although the Commission has an important role, it is not a part of the statutory planning process. Schemes are brought to the Commission freely and voluntarily and there will be no obligation on any party to put forward a scheme for review. The Commission itself decides what schemes it will accept for review.
- 10.3. Early consultation with the Commission is essential, when the project is at a formative stage and when the expertise and advice through the Commission can be most effective. Typically this will be early in the pre-application stage.
- 10.4. Schemes brought forward at an earlier stage will be more beneficial to the client body, indeed some schemes may not be part of any formal planning process. If requested by a client body these types of schemes and those that are requested for review at pre-application stage the client body will be asked to pay costs of the Commission meeting.

11. Before the meeting

- 11.1. To request a review, contact the Executive Officer. Please supply an outline of the scheme in a few lines (including scheme title, location, stage reached) giving any particular reasons why a review is sought. It is helpful to clarify the stage reached with the Planning and Environment Department (including name and contact details of the appropriate officer).
- 11.2. The Executive Officer will then decide (in consultation with the Chairman) if it is a case the Commission will take and, if so, in what form of review and when.
- 11.3. Once a date has been confirmed for a future Commission meeting, the design team will be asked to supply a synopsis - 1-2 pages A4. This will be sent in advance to Commission members attending the meeting. It should include:
 - Name of project
 - Design team
 - Site address
 - Type of planning application with date submitted/date anticipated for submission

- Main statutory constraints (registered buildings, Green Zone, etc.).
 - Synopsis of the scheme, where the emphasis should be on the background, the context and the brief rather than a detailed description of the scheme. Location and site plans should be appended (they will be used for a site visit) and photographs of the site and any existing buildings on the site. The synopsis may be supported by a small selection of drawings and digital images; alternatively, a web address should be given on which one can view the images.
- 11.4. The typical timetable in the run-up to the meeting is for the synopsis/location and site plans to be required two weeks before the meeting date.
- 11.5. The agenda sent to the Commission members attending the meeting will be copied to the design team and Planning and Environment Department.
- 11.6. The principal line of communication is between the Executive Officer and the primary contact in the design team. It is down to the primary contact in the design team to liaise with colleagues in the design team and with the client. For example, it is down to the primary contact to ask the client to attend and contribute to the meeting.

12. Presentations

- 12.1. For full meetings and new cases the Commission asks for a presentation of the scheme.
- 12.2. On returning cases a presentation will not normally be required and it is possible to begin with a recap and an outline of developments since the scheme first came to the Commission. Then discussion follows, often over drawings etc. on the table.
- 12.3. The content of the presentation at full meetings on new cases will depend upon the size, scale and nature of the project and the stage it has reached in its development. The material in this section gives guidelines but some flexibility is possible. In particular, presentations for new cases will usually be less elaborate than for full meetings.
- 12.4. The Commission does not wish to have schemes held back until a fully-prepared and polished presentation can be produced. On the contrary, it prefers to see schemes at an early stage and will not mind if presentations reflect this.

13. Presentation format

- 13.1. Those presenting to the Commission may use display panels, drawings, models, photographs and Powerpoint presentations. Other media by negotiation.
- 13.2. Panels and drawings for pinning up: A1 is preferred.
- 13.3. For meetings at the Commission's usual venue (tbc) display screens are available and Velcro or pins will be provided. For other venues, details will be advised.

- 13.4. The maximum size for pinned-up displays is 12 A1 spaces.
- 13.5. Models are one of the best ways of communicating the concept and design of a project and their use is encouraged wherever possible. Even 'rough sketch models' can be useful. Perspectives and birds-eye views may be suitable for larger projects.
- 13.6. Powerpoint presentations including fly-throughs are acceptable but work best when complemented by static displays as they are sequential and make it difficult to refer quickly to an aspect or to look at one aspect in conjunction with another. Commission discussions will tend to focus on displayed drawings, diagrams and models.
- 13.7. Hard copy material may be delivered to the Commission office/meeting venue ahead of the meeting but only by prior arrangement.
- 13.8. When documents are brought to be handed out, please have at least five copies to distribute: one for each of the four on the Commission, and one for the Commission records.

14. Presentation content

14.1. The following will often be expected:

- A plan showing the site in relation to adjoining properties, access routes and the movement network. A location plan showing the site in relation to its *wider* context is also useful. Aerial photographs of the site and its surroundings can be very useful in this regard. It may be useful to illustrate the historical development of the urban form over time, and it will always be important to indicate designations such as registered buildings/Green Zones, etc. Photographs of the site and existing buildings should be supplied.
- Site plans clearly showing land ownership including public and privately owned areas and the extent of land owned by the client are essential. These should indicate the specific areas that are to be built on, those that are not, buildings for demolition, retention and/or refurbishment. Sections across the site are often useful, especially where the topography is an important factor.
- Landscape analysis and details of the landscape approach.
- Plans, sections and elevations of proposed buildings.
- Photomontages and views demonstrating the development in its context.
- Detailed drawings communicating the architectural approach and materials.

15. Format of the meeting

- 15.1. The Chairman of the Commission will invite the client, design team, planning case officer and/or other stakeholders to contribute in turn.
- 15.2. The presentation usually begins with a short overview presented by the *client* describing the aspiration and concept for the project and the brief established and issued to the design team (5 minutes maximum).

- 15.3. Following this comes the main part of the presentation by the *architect* or *lead designer* to present the project (up to 25 minutes).
- 15.4. The Commission will expect the project to be explained in particular order, first by outlining the brief and describing the nature of the intended site and its context and moving on to a broad description of the design proposal and the principles used before concentrating on the detail of the scheme.
- 15.5. The case officer will then be asked to comment on the policy background, key issues and (if they wish) to give their views of the proposals (5 minutes).
- 15.6. If the scheme involves buildings or sites of historic significance, representatives of the Jersey Heritage Trust/National Trust and Societe Jersiaise may be invited to comment (5 minutes).
- 15.7. It is open to any of the above – client , design team, local planning authority – during their contributions to invite the Commission to address particular issues on which guidance would be particularly welcome.
- 15.8. Following the presentation, questions are asked of any of those presenting by members of the Commission. There is then *discussion*, often around the model or other visual material (30-40 minutes).
- 15.9. Towards the end of the discussion, the Chairman will usually endeavour to draw together the consensus of the meeting and summarise the main points of guidance that have emerged.
- 15.10. The Commission will then discuss the scheme in *closed session* still using the displayed material (10-20 minutes). Those presenting are asked to withdraw – but to remain nearby to collect their material at the end of the session.

16. Attending the meeting

- 16.1. The Commission welcomes having the client or a representative of the client organisation present.
- 16.2. The size and range of the design team who come will vary with the nature and complexity of the scheme. Frequently, there will be representatives of the architects, planners and landscape architects involved. Sometimes others will attend too, e.g. transport, engineering, heritage, environmental sustainability, ecology.
- 16.3. For the Department of Planning and Environment, the representative is often the Director of Development Control (or similar). Sometimes others will attend too, e.g. transport, heritage. The Commission welcomes having representatives of planning policy as well as development control. The Chief Officer is also welcome to attend.

17. After the meeting

- 17.1. A formal written response will be sent to the Minister of the Environment and copies sent to the primary contact in the design team and to the Department of Planning and Environment and to other interested bodies.

- 17.2. When a scheme is in the public domain- that is, if it is the subject of a planning application or is being publicised by its promoters – then the guidance letter is a public document.
- 17.3. When a scheme is not in the public domain, the Commission's view is not made public and the letter carries a caveat.¹
- 17.4. With regard to material submitted, a similar split applies. When a scheme is in the public domain then the Commission assumes that material submitted is public and that the Commission may make use of it in its own publications, presentations, web material, etc. When a scheme is *not* in the public domain, then material will not be published without the permission of the clients and/or designers.

¹ Since the scheme was not the subject of a planning application when it came to the Commission, this letter is offered in confidence to the addressee and those listed as being sent copies. There is no objection to the letter being shared within the respective practices/organisations. The Jersey Architecture Commission reserves the right to make the guidance known should the views contained in this letter be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). The letter would also be made available to any public inquiry concerning the scheme. The Jersey Architecture Commission also reserves the right to make the guidance available to a subsequent meeting for the same site (or, if relevant, an adjacent site) or to another design review should a scheme go before them. If you do not require this letter to be kept confidential, please let me know.

About supplementary planning guidance

The Minister for Planning and Environment may publish guidelines and policies (supplementary planning guidance) in respect of: development generally; any class of development; the development of any area of land; or the development of a specified site.

Supplementary planning guidance may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific, and can provide further detail about either, policies and proposals in the Island Plan, or other issues relevant to the planning process. It can also be used to provide information about how the planning system operates.

Where relevant, supplementary planning guidance will be taken into account as a material consideration in making decisions.

Supplementary planning guidance is issued in a number of different forms including:

- **Advice notes**, which offer more detailed information and guidance about the ways in which Island Plan policies are likely to be operated, interpreted and applied in decision-making;
- **Policy notes**, which can be issued by the Minister, following consultation with key stakeholders, in-between reviews of the Island Plan, to supplement and complement the existing planning policy framework;
- **Masterplans, development frameworks and planning briefs** provide more detailed information and guidance about the development of specific sites and areas of the Island; and
- **Practice notes**, which aim to provide information about how the planning system's protocols and procedures operate.

The current supplementary planning guidance is listed and can be viewed on the States of Jersey website at www.gov.je/planningguidance.

Hard copies of all supplementary planning guidance can be obtained from Planning and Building Services, Department of the Environment, South Hill, St Helier, JE2 4US, telephone: 01534 445508, email: planning@gov.je .