
Farrell Review of Architecture & the Built Environment: RIBA Response

July 2013

The RIBA

The Royal Institute of British Architects champions better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and our members. The 40,000 strong professional institute is committed to serving the public interest through good design and represents 85% of registered architects in the UK as well as a significant number of international members.

RIBA Call for Evidence response

1. Understanding the role for Government in promoting design quality in architecture and the built environment

The RIBA would like to see Government lead the way for a world class built environment – one which delivers long term resilience through well designed, sustainable and inspiring places for people, whilst supporting the growth and prosperity of the British economy. Government can achieve this by fostering a development market that recognises the value of design and the role it must play in shaping new development.

1.1 *Britain has some of the best architects in the world but that does not automatically mean that standards of architectural design in England are as good as they could be. Why is this?*

Whilst there are some exceptional buildings and places being designed and built in the UK, the overall picture remains poor. The current market conditions do not favour good design. We have market failure in England whereby good design is often the exception, and mediocre development is the predominant expression of an industry increasingly focused on short-term financial return on investment, particularly so during this recession. Instead of seeing a high quality product or innovative design solutions as the way to achieve value, new development is all too often an exercise in delivering the minimum standard for the maximum return. This has left us with ‘value engineered’ buildings and places which detract from, rather than enhance, our quality of life. One architect who gave evidence to the Future Homes Commission called this ‘design by spreadsheet’, in which finance executives measure every design element by its construction cost, not its future value.

This lack of emphasis on quality and innovation in the design of new development is symptomatic of failures across the industry, not just elements of the private sector. Public buildings are procured on an upfront-cost basis without due regard to the long-term social value or life cycle cost and thus the public savings that good design can deliver. A superficial attitude of doing more with less in the short-term is not going to lead to long term sustainability and resilience in our towns, cities, communities and economy. **There has been a consistent failure within Government to act in a way which encourages the best outcomes.** Design is too often considered an after-thought or ‘nice to have’. Whilst there is clear passion amongst some ministers and examples of excellent local authorities who insist on good design outcomes, there is an inconsistency in the way the public sector approaches design in the built environment.

The success of programmes such as Grand Designs suggest a public appetite for exceptional design, and polling showed that the public would be more likely to consent to development if it were better¹. Unfortunately there is perhaps not the same expectation within the British public that the built environment should be of a high quality. Unlike many of our European counterparts, we have become conditioned to accept mediocrity. Stimulating demand for better buildings will be crucial in order to change this situation but in an era where new development has stalled and with a chronic under-supply of housing, the public has little chance to influence development in their areas.

The Government must drive the agenda to deliver a world class built environment – one which delivers long term resilience through well designed, sustainable and inspiring places for people. This should be a priority that can be delivered at the same time as supporting the growth and prosperity of the British economy. Government must use its influence to foster a development market that recognises the value of design and the role it must play in shaping new development.

Government must set out a national, strategic vision for the towns, cities and places we want to create. This should be aligned with economic policy and integrated across other areas of relevant policy-making to clearly demonstrate leadership and commitment. The focus should be to incentivise good design and target market interventions where necessary, to build on heritage and cultural context and to consolidate a sense of place. This should, over time, create a market in which design is appropriately valued and which will not need further Government intervention. This vision can be articulated as a Built Environment Design Policy (see Q1.3) and delivered through a robust framework of policy and support (Q1.2/Q1.4).

1.2 How can the "everyday" quality of our housing, public spaces and buildings be significantly improved?

Everyday quality could be delivered through a healthy, diverse and more competitive market for design quality. As outlined above, the reasons for poor quality buildings and places are numerous and the root causes of market failure are complex. However, we believe that Government could and should play a more proactive role in addressing some of these market failures and help create the conditions in which quality will become commonplace.

Strong Government leadership and commitment is needed in order to put in place the necessary policy and support framework that recognises the intrinsic value of design and innovation to the development industry.

A Government Built Environment Design Policy

In our answer to Q1.3 we call for the introduction of a Built Environment Design Policy: a cross-cutting, long-term strategic vision for great places that drives and informs the approach to development of the built environment at every level of Government.

¹ 73% of people would support housing developments if homes were better designed and in keeping with the local area, *Little boxes, fewer homes*, Shelter, 2013

The Planning System

Poor standards of design in the built environment have long been recognised by Government and attempts have been made to raise the bar through the use of planning policy and legislation. A duty for good design for public authorities within the 2008 Planning Act and a strong policy on design was introduced through Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1). PPS1 was built upon by strengthening policy related to design within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), incorporating an ambition to achieve good design as a core planning principle.

However, despite the attempts by successive Governments to improve design quality in the built environment through the planning system, policy has often not been translated on the ground. This is due to a chronic lack of resources within the system (discussed in Q1.4) but also a more fundamental misunderstanding of what good design is and how it is assessed.

Constant and inconsistent reforms to planning have also had a negative impact. The system is now too risk averse and bureaucratic, with a tick box culture in many authorities. Too many poor schemes still slip through the net and the system too often favours mediocrity over innovation and creative solutions.

The way the planning system values and interprets design therefore needs to change and we must recapture the creative, visionary agenda upon which it was built. There also needs to be a re-balancing of the system, to promote a more equitable approach to development and move away from the current culture, which is beholden to a short sighted and highly speculative economic agenda. Having to retrofit good planning into a framework primarily shaped to encourage development, often at any cost, is leaving us with poor quality places.

This is particularly true in regards to the NPPF. Whilst the emphasis on design is good, the framework is heavily skewed in favour of economic development ahead of the social and environmental tenets of sustainability. The decision to entrench financial viability as a key element of decision-making is having a particularly worrying impact on the ground, embedding a short-termism at the heart of the system. Viability testing within the planning system is being interpreted in many cases in a one-dimensional way, focusing solely on the finances of landowners and developers, overriding any recognition of the longer-term costs that poor development will bring to communities and the public purse. Guidance should ensure that viability testing considers the long term economic, social and environmental interests of communities as well as developers and landowners. In addition it should be clear that viability testing is only one part of the wider evidence base of local plans whose objective should remain the long term achievement of sustainable development. In our answer to Q2.5 we suggest a Design Quality Task Force could be established to review government policy areas, such as this, and their impact on delivering design quality (recommendation 19).

In order to re-calibrate the planning system in favour of better design outcomes, local government needs to see its role differently. Councils should increasingly act as promoters and enablers, rather than regulators of new development, creating a strong framework which allows a robust design process to flourish. The emphasis should be on ending the eternal battle that exists in the planning system and creating a more equitable and inclusive relationship with designers, developers, communities and local businesses. The planning system could also be an important vehicle to explore and promote diversity in development. For instance, the housing sector could benefit considerably by creating the conditions to support custom build and self-build, or

allowing smaller developers easier access to the market through more intelligent allocation of land. More details on the role Local Authorities can play locally, with their current powers, can be found in Chapter Five of *Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs* by the Future Homes Commission, 2012.

Recommendation 1

Local authorities should set out a percentage of public land disposals which should be allocated custom build, self-build and smaller developers in the form of serviced plots, in order to encourage a more diverse and competitive local housing market.

Neighbourhood Planning has enormous potential to democratise design and embed communities within the design process. We discuss this further in our answer to Q4.3

Public sector leadership as a client

The public sector must take the lead in showing that there is a better way to deliver high quality design. Government needs to show leadership as a client by favouring long-term value ahead of short-term cost considerations in its approach to the built environment. It should set a benchmark in the market which should drive the private sector to compete.

The public sector has often failed to harness the full potential of the powers and assets it has at its disposal but by thinking more creatively, Government can begin to create the conditions in which a market for quality can start to emerge. Government has powers to plan, to compulsory purchase and procure.

It also has a tremendous amount of assets at its disposal which if used in the right way, will bring about long-term economic growth, help re-balance development in favour of the public interest and transform the fortunes of communities.

One key driver of change would be a radical new approach to the use of public land. For many years, the public sector has often failed to realise the potential of this most valuable asset. The imperative – driven by dogmatic Treasury rules – has been to dispose of land to the market as quickly as possible, to the highest bidder. This is a wasted opportunity to put Government on the front foot by using its assets as a lever to encourage better quality development. Selling the land with no strong conditions in terms of the quality of development that should be delivered, means that reactive planning is often the only tool that councils can use in order to influence the subsequent development of that land.

Instead of encouraging a fire-sale of public sector land assets, Government should incentivise councils to use them more effectively and productively.

There has to be a clear expectation that public land that can be developed should be brought forward. But in return, central Government – through a bolstered Homes and Communities Agency and expert support from other relevant organisations – should provide a greater level of support for councils to maximise the long-term social, environmental and economic value of their assets. This support should include access to up-front development finance, design enabling and planning expertise, as well as more practical support related to the mechanics of delivery and in forming contractual arrangements with developers and other partners.

Recommendation 2

Government should review the rules set out in relation to the disposal of public sector land. Government should look to incentivise local authorities to bring forward proposals for development of the land that they own, by offering the support and appropriate expertise they need in order to develop proactive, robust and workable proposals for development that demonstrates high quality design in place-making.

In addition to providing a greater incentive for councils to bring development forward themselves, there needs to be a much stronger more strategic approach to the sale of land to the private sector. **A detailed design brief should accompany all strategic public sector land disposal and set out the standards expected for any development.** The sale should be appraised not only in terms of cost but on the quality of development proposed and the strategic vision for the site. Ownership of the land should only be fully transferred once the development is delivered to the quality demanded by the local authority. This would ensure that developers get the land they need but also give greater reassurance to the taxpayer that their assets are being used wisely to create the kind of communities they want to live in. This will not just benefit society long-term but also has the potential to deliver a better financial return to the public body in charge, where a well-designed development becomes a more valuable asset. It would also begin to re-configure the development process, ensuring that developers are increasingly competing on the quality of product they can deliver, rather than how much they are able to pay for land. In turn, this would break the hegemony of the larger developers, opening up opportunities for more design-conscious builders.

Recommendation 3

A detailed design brief should accompany all strategic public sector land disposal and set out the standards expected for any development. Bids should be appraised on the quality of scheme submitted rather than up-front cost. Ownership of the land should only be fully transferred once the development is delivered to the quality demanded by the local authority.

As with its profligacy in terms of public land, the public sector and local government in particular has been equally poor at using its procurement powers to deliver quality. The weighting for design quality within procurement appraisals is superseded by short-term cost considerations. Meanwhile, there is an attitude to risk which prevents innovation and long-term value, often in direct conflict with the aspirations of planning policy. **This approach needs to be reversed and the procurement process re-configured so that design quality holds much greater weight in the consideration of tenders, and the whole life-cycle cost is adequately accounted for.** We have seen local authorities take the lead and do this; the Future Homes Commission reported that the brief and procurement process Leicester City Council prepared for the Ashton Green site included a strong weighting for quality (see *Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs*, page 73).

The passage of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was a step forward in terms of ensuring that the procurement of services by Government reflects broader consideration beyond short-term cost. However, the Act does not currently apply to the procurement of public works or the disposal of public land. The Government should amend the Act to entrench principles of social value at the heart of the procurement process and could bring about a cultural shift in regards to the procurement of buildings and in maximising public sector assets.

Recommendation 4

Government should review the weighting given to design quality in its procurement models and consider setting a minimum weighting for built environment and construction projects.

Recommendation 5

Government should amend the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to extend the duty on public authorities to consider the social, environmental and economic value of procurement to include public works and the disposal of public land.

The planning system can also play a much stronger role in assessing and upholding the quality of public building and infrastructure projects through the use of tools such as Design Review. Many public projects have been through the design review process but this should be a requirement set out for all major public construction projects and programmes.

Recommendation 6

In order to ensure value for public money, the Government should build a requirement into all major public sector building projects and programmes to present schemes to a design review panel operated in conformity with the Design Review: Principles and Practice guidance produced by Design Council, Landscape Institute, RIBA and RTPI.

Building Performance Evaluation

Government should take a lead in encouraging greater use of Building Performance Evaluation to ensure that buildings and public realm projects perform to the level they were designed to. This evaluation includes assessing the energy and environmental impact of the building once it is in use but also, for example, surveying the building's users to understand whether the design aids productivity and wellbeing.

The Government can demonstrate leadership as a client by conducting Building Performance Evaluations on all public buildings and sharing these details as widely as possible through its open data agenda. This information would be invaluable in helping Government make astute design decisions in future projects and would also form a major evidence base to help professionals measure and assess the value of good design, which we discuss in Section 2 below.

Recommendation 7

Government should conduct Building Performance Evaluations on all public buildings and sharing these details as widely as possible through its open data agenda.

Standards and Regulation

Where the market is failing to deliver high quality design and innovation, standards and regulations should seek to enforce quality nationally, but have flexibility to allow local response to character and context. Whilst the current Government has pursued a distinctly de-regulatory agenda (and in some cases brought about welcome regulatory reform), their approach has been quite dogmatic, as demonstrated through the '1 in 1 out' rule. Government therefore needs to recognise that regulation is sometimes necessary and can serve an important purpose in protecting the public against the inconsistencies of the market.

The use of standards and regulation should be clearly evidence based and should be used to respond to specific areas of market failure or to promote a greater ambition in quality where the market is slow to innovate. In housing, for instance, a chronic under-supply has caused little choice and consumers cannot vote with their feet to drive design standards. Whilst some private developers have the forethought to invest in good design, this is not common place and there is a clear case for regulation.

Recommendation 8

The Government should conduct a Design Quality Audit to better understand how the different sectors of the industry are performing and identify areas of market failure. Where the market fails to provide choice, innovation or basic levels of quality, the Government should take steps to help the industry overcome the barriers to design quality and where necessary, regulate in order to insist upon it for the public good.

Private sector incentives

The Government should start to explore ways in which the private sector can be directly incentivised to contribute to a better market for design in development, by investing up-front in quality.

Instruments for funding public infrastructure and service provision, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements, should be re-focused to better drive quality. CIL is intended as a mechanism to offer developers certainty, in a bid to kick start growth, by setting transparent tariffs in advance for sites and attaching a fixed charging schedule. This does not necessarily ensure adequate public realm and public services accompany any proposed development, nor does it ensure quality proposals come forward more often than not. By setting fixed tariffs, Local Authorities are forced to concede the initiative to both leverage high quality proposals and mitigate the effects of poor ones. This is endemic of an attitude to promote development, regardless of quality. CIL should be seen as an instrument to ensure quality of new development and quality public services in the public interest, and both CIL and Section 106 should be reviewed by the Design Quality Task Force we recommend in Section 2 below; please see Recommendation 19.

VAT can be a powerful tool to incentivise both the private sector and the sustainability agenda. Currently, VAT rates favour new build (such as a 0% rate on new residential) over renovation and repair (currently subject to a standard 20% VAT charge). Not only does this incentivise a ‘demolish and rebuild’ approach without due regard to the role an existing building may play in the local context, but there is no requirement on quality for that new build to become tax exempt, missing a crucial opportunity for public sector leverage.

By reducing the VAT rate on sustainable refurbishment to create a more level playing field in construction VAT, we can start to stimulate a market that would not only reduce CO2 emissions, but also look to reuse existing assets that contribute positively to the character and heritage of place.

In addition, new build residential should not automatically be afforded the luxury of a 0% VAT rate unless development meets or exceeds a certain standard in design (e.g energy efficiency), which could be set out by Government and monitored through the planning and building control apparatus.

Recommendation 9

In order to incentivise sustainable refurbishment, there should be a reduction in the 20% VAT rate to 5% on repair and improvement work.

Recommendation 10

In order to incentivise better quality and more sustainable new build property, the existing 0% VAT rate on New Build Residential dwellings should be applied only where it can be demonstrated that works meet or exceed standards set by Government above the Building Regulations. Where this cannot be demonstrated, a standard 5% VAT rate should be applied

1.3 *Whether having a formal architecture policy (as some European countries do) would help to achieve improved outcomes, what the benefits might be and how they could be measured, and what might be the potential aims of such a policy?*

In a recent poll of our membership, 80% of respondents agreed that England should have an architecture policy. They wanted this policy to achieve four things in particular:

- Incentivising developers to create and promote good design
- Regulating developers to create and promote good design
- Improving the sustainability of our built environment
- Improving education about design (across the school system)

However, many of our advisory groups raised the importance of the changing nature of the profession. The boundaries between architects, urban designers, landscape architects and other design professionals are changing and becoming more fluid. In 2011, The RIBA's Building Futures report *The Future for Architects?* researched some of these changes, and the RIBA is currently reviewing membership categories to better reflect the changing nature of the profession. Further, from a national industry and international trade perspective, construction and the creative industries professionals work closely together. It is often the case that these professions rely on one another for projects to be won and delivered. Any architecture policy will impact on a whole range of people working in the industry, from planners and surveyors to designers, developers and contractors. We therefore recommend that the benefits of uniting and integrating the industry to achieve common goals, be reflected through a more holistic Built Environment Design Policy.

Architecture and built environment policies have been used with great success in some north-western European countries, where aspirations of quality design and quality of place are well ingrained in Government, industry and public psyche. Denmark, for instance, has created both a framework and a market to support the delivery of high quality places by recognising the value of design in delivering a better quality of life. The policy in Denmark was linked to growth and prosperity and Danes have become known for their innovation and expertise at the forefront of delivering a high quality urban experience. There is a clear understanding that encouraging the export of design expertise abroad depends on getting it right at home first.

It was imperative that the Danish Government took a long-term approach to this aspiration, setting a national agenda which is now reaping reward with Danish design firms securing an increased international profile, at the forefront of place-based

innovation, and Copenhagen regularly coming towards the top of lists charting the most liveable cities in the world.

We believe, that by setting out a clear vision for creating great places (Q1.1), and by strengthening mechanisms for delivery of this agenda across Government departments (Q1.2), a Built Environment Design Policy would have a positive effect in this country, improving standards of design across our towns and cities.

Recommendation 11

The Government should produce a cross-cutting Built Environment Design Policy which sets out a long-term vision for great places and drives and informs its approach to the built environment at every level of Government.

In order to deliver maximum benefits, we consider that a Built Environment Design Policy must:

- Set out a long-term, strategic and unifying national vision in the approach of Government to the built environment and the creation of great places.
- Be high-level and non-prescriptive
- Go beyond political and economic cycles and look to shape places in the long-term interest of people, communities and local business
- Be intrinsically aligned to both national economic strategy and the objectives of planning policy
- Engage the public in design quality.

Policy implementation

Whilst the Built Environment Design Policy would provide Government, industry and the public with a clear sense of direction, a policy document alone will not deliver the required outcomes. It is therefore imperative that any Built Environment Design Policy is embedded at the heart of Government and supported by a robust framework for delivery. It would require coordination, strong leadership and a show of long-term commitment at the highest levels of Government to ensure that the ambitions set out within the vision drive future decision making in favour of better quality outcomes.

In order to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively, we believe that responsibility for its production and delivery should sit within the Cabinet Office. Architecture and design as an “issue” is cross-cutting and strategically important in delivering the Government’s social, environmental and economic objectives.

Architecture does not have a natural home in Government. At present, responsibility sits within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) but whilst it plays an important crucial role, its status within Government is limited as a result. We believe that overall responsibility for it should be removed from the DCMS, which, since the abolition of Cabe, lacks the teeth and capacity to drive forward a meaningful impact on design issues such as planning housing, public procurement and trade.

Creating great places through good design should be a priority for Government and we believe this needs a Minister with a cross-cutting role, capable of providing oversight across government and implementing a clear Built Environment Design Policy.

Recommendation 12

Responsibility for architecture should be removed from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. A Minister with a cross-cutting role to promote quality in the built environment and implement the Built Environment Design Policy across Government should sit within the Cabinet Office.

Recommendation 13

All Ministers with responsibility for overseeing policy for the built environment (e.g. Planning and Housing Ministers) or delivering public building projects (such as the Schools Minister), should have specific responsibility for promoting design quality.

In addition to a Minister with specific responsibility for promoting design quality within Government policy and programmes, the RIBA believes the government should appoint a Chief Built Environment Design Adviser. The Chief Built Environment Design Adviser would have specific responsibility for producing and implementing the Built Environment Design Policy and overseeing the Design Quality Audit (as recommended in Q 1.2). This should be a permanent post within Government and the Adviser should have the relevant qualifications and expertise in the built environment.

Recommendation 14

A Chief Government Built Environment Design Adviser should be appointed to support the Minister for the Built Environment and drive forward the Government’s policy on design quality

1.4 What can local and national bodies do to promote design quality? What policy infrastructure would be beneficial to assist them in this important task?

If local planning is to become the cornerstone of quality development in Britain, then Local Planning Authorities must have the resource and capacity to make strategic, long term judgements, adequately appraise the quality and impact of proposed development and enable public participation in the design process. Public planning has severely suffered from extensive public sector budget cuts with skilled practitioners moving into the private sector. Government need to look at ways to ensure specialist expertise regarding issues such as placemaking, heritage & conservation and sustainability is accessible to Local Authorities in need.

One potential solution to plug the skills gap could be an extended version of the recommendation by the Future Homes Commission that the Local Government Association (LGA) should work with local authorities to identify the skills they need and set up a peer review service to share expertise in delivering large housing developments. This could go beyond housing and provide support for place-making and potentially other skills gaps such as conservation and heritage expertise.

Recommendation 15

The LGA should work with local authorities to identify the skills they need and set up a peer review service to share expertise in design, place-making and conservation.

The Design Network, comprising of established design review panels and expertise from former regional centres of excellence in place-making, is well placed to coordinate and deliver support at a local level, along with other local enablers such as Locality or professional organisations such as the RIBA. By consolidating established,

local networks of skill, expertise and support in design and place-making, the Government can maintain momentum that has been building over the previous decade and is currently in danger of being lost to the long term detriment of local communities and local economies. This local support infrastructure must also play a crucial outreach role in communicating the ambition of a Built Environment Design Policy to local people and communities.

Recommendation 16

In order to ensure that policy on design is translated locally, the Government should provide seed funding to the Design Network and other local enablers, to help facilitate an established, localised network of design support and enabling services for local government

1.5 What other recommendations would you like to make relating to this particular theme?

To summarise our recommendations as to the role of Government in promoting design quality, we suggest the Government consider the following:

Set out a clear vision for creating great places in a Built Environment Design Policy and strengthen mechanisms for delivery across Government

- The Government should produce a cross-cutting Built Environment Design Policy which sets out a long-term vision for great places and drives and informs its approach to the built environment at every level of Government.
- Responsibility for architecture should be removed from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. A Minister with a cross-cutting role to promote quality in the built environment and implement the Built Environment Design Policy across Government should sit within the Cabinet Office.
- All Ministers with responsibility for overseeing policy for the built environment (e.g. Planning and Housing Ministers) or delivering public building projects (such as the Schools Minister), should have specific responsibility for promoting design quality.
- A Chief Government Built Environment Design Adviser should be appointed to support the Minister for the Built Environment and drive forward the Government’s policy on design quality

Demonstrating leadership as a client

Public land

- Government should review the rules set out in relation to the disposal of public sector land. Government should look to incentivise local authorities to bring forward proposals for development of the land that they own, by offering the support and appropriate expertise they need in order to develop proactive, robust and workable proposals for development that demonstrates high quality design in place-making.
- A detailed design brief should accompany all strategic public sector land disposal and set out the standards expected for any development. Bids should be appraised on the quality of scheme submitted rather than up-front cost. Ownership of the land should only be fully transferred once the development is delivered to the quality demanded by the local authority

Public procurement

- Government should review the weighting given to design quality in its procurement models and consider setting a minimum weighting for built environment and construction projects.
- Government should amend the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to extend the duty on public authorities to consider the social, environmental and economic value of procurement to include public works and the disposal of public land.
- In order to ensure value for public money, the Government should build a requirement into all major public sector building projects and programmes to present schemes to a design review panel operated in conformity to the Design Review: Principles and Practice guidance produced by Design Council, Landscape Institute, RIBA and RTPI.
- Government should conduct Building Performance Evaluations on all public buildings and sharing these details as widely as possible through its open data agenda.

The planning system

- Local authorities should set out a percentage of public land disposals which should be allocated custom build, self-build and smaller developers in the form of serviced plots, in order to encourage a more diverse and competitive local housing market

Conduct a Design Quality Audit to identify and take action to resolve market failure

- The Government should conduct a Design Quality Audit to better understand how the different sections of the industry are performing and identify areas of market failure. Where the market fails to provide choice, innovation or basic levels of quality, the Government should take steps to help the industry overcome the barriers to design quality and where necessary, regulate in order to insist upon it for the public good.

Incentivising the private sector

- In order to incentivise sustainable refurbishment, there should be a reduction in the 20% VAT rate to 5% on repair and improvement work.
- In order to incentivise better quality and more sustainable new build property, the existing 0% VAT rate on New Build Residential dwellings should be applied only where it can be demonstrated that works meet or exceed standards set by Government above the Building Regulations. Where this cannot be demonstrated, a standard 5% VAT rate should be applied

Support local government to deliver good outcomes

- The LGA should work with local authorities to identify the skills they need and set up a peer review service to share expertise in design, place-making and conservation.
- In order to ensure that policy on design is translated locally, the Government should provide seed funding to the Design Network and other local enablers, to help facilitate an established, localised network of design support and enabling services for local government

2. The economic benefits of good architecture and design, and maximising the UK's growth potential

2.1 *In what ways does architecture and built environment design contribute to the UK economy?*

There are many ways in which architecture contributes to the economy, many of which are indirect and are therefore difficult to quantify and evaluate. But we believe they can be better understood and we are setting up a long-term research programme in order to do so. The contributions architecture makes to the economy can be grouped into three themes:

1. A world-leading profession
2. Creating places that attract people and investment
3. Improving lives, businesses and opportunities

1. A world-leading profession

Britain is home to some of the world's best architects and many British-based practices have designed places and buildings all over Britain and the world. Work undertaken by architects and the fees they receive is therefore a valuable source of income to the UK.

The Government's own estimate of income generated by architecture is set out in the DCMS Creative Industries report 2011.² This report records that the Creative Industries accounted for 2.89% of gross value added (GVA) in the UK and for 10.6% of the UK's exports in 2009. Architecture generated £3,650 million GVA in 2008 (0.28% of total UK GVA) and £3,290 million GVA in 2009 (0.26% of total UK GVA). The export value of architecture in 2009 was £324 million, which amounts to 3.6% of creative industries exports and 0.4% of all exports.

The 2012-13 RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey of RIBA Chartered Practices found that the total UK fee income was £1.58 billion. 80% of the total income is earned in the UK and 20% internationally. Despite a rising trend in exports over the past decade overall earnings are down by 15% since 2011-12.

2. Creating places that attract people and investment

Beyond the fee income of the architectural and urban design profession, there is additional economic value created by good design. This often goes unaccounted for in Government estimates of the value of architecture. Whilst further work is needed to model how this added value can be captured and evaluated, it is critical that this anomaly is addressed.

Unfortunately, Government often fails to take account of the long-term costs of poor development and its approach to development is often one-dimensional. For example, the upcoming Housing Standards Review has only assessed the up-front cost of security, space, energy and other standards when homes are built, without also factoring in the likely social costs of crime, carbon emissions and the social consequences of poor quality of life for households. This demonstrates the short-sighted approach often taken by Government when it comes to new development. Government needs to build up a better understanding of the long-term value of good

² *Creative industries economic estimates*, DCMS, 2011

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/77959/Creative-Industries-Economic-Estimates-Report-2011-update.pdf

design in order to inform its decision-making and avoid some of the costly mistakes we have made in the past.

Below, we have set out a number of ways in which good architectural design creates economic value, which have been derived from desktop research and analysis undertaken by RIBA to inform our future research programme:

Market value

Architectural and urban design have a track record in making the best places to live and work. Urban design can help facilitate a sense of community, and well used infrastructure and green spaces contribute to health and wellbeing. The role of aesthetics is also relevant here; there may be evidence that people prefer more attractive places.

Our desktop review found that there is some evidence that attractive and energy efficient homes increase in value above market rates, and that homes and offices with proximity to green space can achieve higher values and faster letting times. One report included case studies of properties near or overlooking green space. Findings included a 19% premium for homes on and off park locations compared to properties away from the park, and that the business occupancy rate was higher for commercial properties overlooking a new green square, leading to the evolution of a professional business community in law, financial services and the creative industries.³

Cultural value: iconic buildings and education

Good architecture creates destinations and local identities. Our desktop review found evidence that heritage assets create tourism and bring economic activity to an area. There are also positive social impacts to be gained from good architecture, such as civic identity and pride, cultural value, or whether other businesses and people choosing to locate to the vicinity and bring further growth. For example, the regeneration of one derelict modernist building, the De La Warr Pavilion, added over £11.7 million to the region's economy which, in turn, has generated another £4.5 million through further economic activity.⁴ Internationally, a Danish survey revealed that 55% of businesses believe that cultural heritage helps to create a good environment for the company, 53% would like a building with cultural heritage significance, and 28% indicate that cultural heritage has major importance for the location of their business.⁵

Learning through architecture is another important aspect of cultural value, which we expand on in our response to Section 4.

3. Improving lives, businesses and opportunities

Better buildings have a range of positive impacts that benefit businesses and society. Our desktop review uncovered a range of academic studies finding that good design contributes to better behaviour and results in schools, faster recovery in hospitals,

³ See case studies of Mesnes Park, Merseyside and Queen Square, Bristol in *Does money grow on trees?*, Cabe, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/does-money-grow-on-trees.pdf>

⁴ *Creative Impact, De La Warr Pavilion Economic Impact Evaluation* http://www.dlwp.com/documents/DeLaWarrPavilionEconomicImpactEvaluation_p3-8_PlusCover.pdf

⁵ *A Nation of Architecture, Denmark, settings for life and growth*, National Cultural Heritage Agency and the Realdania Foundation, 2005

and improved productivity in workplaces. All of these benefits contribute to our economy but their benefits are intangible.

Design is a contributing factor to success in hospitals, schools and workplaces. The precise contribution of design is difficult to determine when other factors can be equally important; for example excellent care and teaching staff. However, we have found research that defines how good design can help; please see our response to Q2.2 below for examples.

Other types of evidence were missing. Whilst some developers report anecdotally that investing in excellent design and/or a community engagement approach to design can reduce the time it takes to get through planning, there is no sound evidence published to prove this is the case. However, there are ways that good design could be linked to the planning process, so that good architecture could speed up the planning process and make a strong contribution to economic recovery in the construction sector; we outlined some of these in Section 1.

2.2 *It is claimed that high standards of architectural and built environment design add economic value. Can this be demonstrated and, if so, how?*

There is some evidence but it is inconsistent, usually carried out by different organisations using different methodologies. What is needed is a major, impartial national evidence base and the Government could play a role in setting the conditions for this.

Existing evidence that good design delivers value includes:

Better hospitals can help recovery rates and the amount (and therefore cost) of care and medication. A report surveyed and evaluated the scientific research on evidence-based healthcare design and its implications for designing better and safer hospitals. It found that good design can: improve safety by reducing the risk of hospital-acquired infections; reduce medical errors, and through this, save lives and an estimated cost of \$17-\$29 billion per annum in US hospitals nationwide; reduce need for pain medication in rooms designed to harness nature, light and other environmental factors by 22%; and deliver 8.5% faster recovery rates, and overall shorter hospital stays.⁶

A study analysed the impact of classroom design on pupils' learning by testing hypotheses of positive impacts on learning within a neuroscience framework of three design principles. These were tested using data collected on 751 pupils from 34 varied classrooms in seven different schools in the UK. The study revealed that the classroom environment can affect a child's academic progress over a year by as much as 25% and the key features (73%) affecting pupil productivity were identified at the 'class' level, linked entirely to six built environment design parameters: colour, choice, connection, complexity, flexibility and light.⁷

We have seen evidence (ranging from anecdotal to academic and market research, quantitative and qualitative) that good architectural can i) reduce time for planning permission, ii) reduce energy consumed or waste produced by a building, iii) contribute to the wellbeing and happiness of residents, staff and other building users.

⁶ *Review of the research literature on evidence-based healthcare design*, Ulrich, 2008

⁷ *A holistic, multi-level analysis identifying the impact of classroom design on pupils' learning*, University of Salford, commissioned by THiNK, 2013

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360132312002582>

The desktop review found evidence about the impact of green design on energy consumption, market value and wellbeing. Research shows that the green design attributes of buildings and indoor environments can improve worker productivity and occupant health and well-being, resulting in bottom line benefits for businesses. Findings from a study of 643 buildings in the United States have shown commissioning costs amounted to 0.4% of the overall construction cost, while the whole building energy savings equated to 16% and 13% for existing buildings and new construction, respectively.⁸

In Q2.1 above we explained that the market value of well-designed buildings is often higher than other buildings, but this usually remains unmeasured. Some good examples of the value of well-designed homes were found by the Future Homes Commission, an independent inquiry facilitated by RIBA in 2012 to determine how Britain can build more and better homes. For example, the Commission highlighted a site in Nottingham with highly sustainable homes which also included other excellent design features, such as spacious rooms and large windows. The homes were valued higher than other local properties of the same size, and a second valuation of one home two years after it was completed found it had increased above the local market rate. The homes also had lower energy bills than comparative local properties.⁹

Overcoming the challenges in valuing good design.

Surveyors do not always consider good design features when valuing homes, reducing the market incentive for developers to invest in quality. The RICS suggested to the Future Homes Commission that only a statistically sound, national evidence base on the value of design within housing would encourage surveyors to amend their valuation methodologies.

The Government can help reverse this negative trend that fails to capture evidence about the value of design and can help to create the conditions for a functioning market in which design sells its own benefits by undertaking some of the measures recommended in Section 1 above. In particular, Recommendations 7 (Building Performance Evaluations) and 8 (Design Quality Audit) would deliver essential data that only Government has the authority to create.

RIBA is embarking on a major three-year programme to evaluate the value of good design. By partnering with us to fund new research that will benefit British architectural brand, the value of public buildings could be determined so that future purchasing decisions are made wisely and so that public buildings communicate British architectural excellence across the globe. We would like to discuss this option in more detail with the relevant policy-makers.

Recommendation 17

Government should co-fund the RIBA’s research programme into the economic value of good design and support the creation and analysis of a national evidence base.

⁸ *The Business Case for Green Building (A Review of the Costs and Benefits For Developers, Investors and Occupants)*, World Green Buildings Council, 2013
http://www.worldgbc.org/files/7513/6257/0199/Business_Case_For_Green_Building_small_2013-03-06.pdf

⁹ See case study of Green Street, Nottingham, in *Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs* by the Future Homes Commission, 2012. <http://www.ribablogs.com/files/FHCHiRes.pdf>

2.3 *What is the commercial value of our historic built environment for the UK brand and for local economies and tourism?*

Evidence we have seen as to the value of heritage assets has been shared in Q2.1 above and in Section 3 below. But new iconic buildings that do not have heritage asset status are also important in delivering tourism and cultural value. We give more detail on this topic in Section 3.

2.4 *How do we ensure the culture of architectural and built environment design excellence is part of a perceived national brand identity that can be exported and how can our expertise (such as place-making and sustainability) be offered to a rapidly urbanising world?*

UK trained architects enjoy a particularly strong international reputation for professionalism, integrity and design flair. This reputation derives from a combination of factors including a tightly regulated profession together with high standards of education which encourage creativity and innovation. This is evidenced by the many completed projects throughout the world, the best of which are recognised annually by the RIBA International Awards.

Architects working in Britain operate in a collaborative, cosmopolitan and increasingly multi-disciplinary environment and are recognised for their skill and expertise in dealing with a range of issues from place-making and urban design through to regeneration, conservation and sustainability. Architectural practice and built environment design in the UK operate in a mature professional environment supported by a robust regulatory framework, much of which has been codified in a way which does not yet exist in other countries.

The role of RIBA

It is notable that in many parts of the developing world the profession of architecture does not enjoy a similarly high profile, nor is it supported or regulated in the same way as it is in the UK. The RIBA is therefore frequently invited to work with other countries to develop a framework for the practice and promotion of good architecture and we promote the British profession in doing so.

Practice and membership

The institute currently has 40,479 members, 4,521 of whom reside internationally (data sourced 2013), spread throughout 110 countries and with a concentration of members in China (792), United States (420), Ireland (405), Australia (337), Canada (226), Singapore (200), UAE (167), Malaysia (159) and South Africa (121). This compares with the American Institute of Architects which has a total of 77,000 members but only 1,344 of whom are international members (data sourced 2011). The institute currently has 3 overseas Chapters, in the Gulf, the USA and Hong Kong.

Education

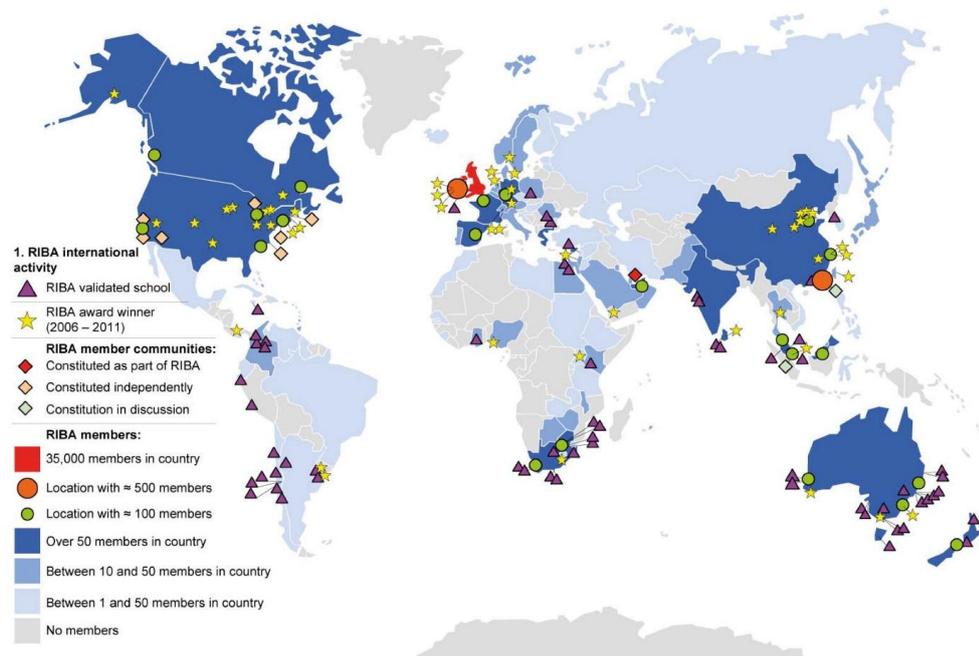
The RIBA, through its system of validation, is a global leader in the field of architectural education and there are circa 15,000 students currently distributed amongst 47 schools of architecture in the UK. Approximately 30% of undergraduates are from overseas. The RIBA also directly validates 27 schools of architecture in 13 countries including: Bulgaria, Korea, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Ireland, Malaysia, Peru, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Colombia and Chile involving a total of circa 20,000 students. It also manages the validation system on behalf of UNESCO and the

UIA which covers over 45 schools of architecture in Egypt, France, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea and Russia, involving a further 30,000 students.

International Activity

In addition to the influence created by virtue of its members work, the RIBA maintains a high level of ongoing international activity. The following are among a range of recent activities:

- The signing of an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ho Chi Minh University in Vietnam
- The development of an MOU with the emerging architectural institutes in Libya
- Support for a major international architectural competition in Libya
- Support for a major international architectural competition in Hungary
- Proposals for the development of an international architectural award for a Gulf State
- Proposals for the development of a new national building code for a Gulf State.
- The development of a programme of activity to support trade liberalisation in a Far Eastern country



International Trade

The 2012-13 RIBA Business Benchmarking survey found that the total UK fee income was £1.58bn. Half of all income was earned by Large Practices -firms over 50 people. Large practices, which represent 3% of practices, accounted for 40% of the 23,500 people in the survey. London based practices account for a third of all practices and generate nearly half of the total income. 80% of the total income is earned in the UK and 20% internationally, though nearly half of this figure is understood to have been earned by a small number of firms based in London, and much of the remainder was earned in Europe where the architectural market is estimated to be worth Euro 15bn. Earnings as a whole are down by 15% since 2011-12.

This contrasts with the most recent figures available from the USA which reveal that, in 2012, projected non-US billings by US based firms was \$2.02bn and this has grown consistently at a rate of between 10-15% per annum for over a decade. Over 73% of firms are bullish about the opportunities for US based architects abroad over a five year horizon.

In 2011, the ONS found that the total international trade in architectural services was £286m in 2009, £354m in 2010 and £339m in 2011. This was matched with earnings from engineering of £3,741m 2009, £3,727m 2010 and £4,296m in 2011.

The figures above demonstrate the huge opportunity for international work, which can only benefit the architectural and related professions and UK PLC.

The role of the UK Trade & Investment (UKTI)

The Government can support RIBA and other organisations in promoting the British architectural profession internationally and generating trade and commerce by establishing a Built Environment Forum within UKTI. Through this Forum all those with an interest in this sector can more effectively coordinate their efforts. Such a forum would include representatives from other professional institutes such as: ICE, IStructE, CIBSE, RICS, RTPI together with colleagues from BSI, BRE and the CPA. These are the organisations which rely upon one another for success in the global marketplace and such a forum would enable its members to align their international trade activity more effectively.

Recommendation 18
 UKTI should establish a Built Environment Forum through which all those with an interest in this sector can more effectively coordinate their efforts. The forum should include representatives from professional institutes.

2.5 To enhance market leadership in built environment design how can we ensure that the UK is leading and responding to innovations in technology, sustainability and communications in an era of rapid globalisation?

We conducted a survey of RIBA members to inform our response to this review. We asked: **Are British architects and designers at the forefront global innovations in technology, sustainability and communications in their work?** 65% answered YES and 35% answered NO.¹⁰

When we asked respondents what could be done to improve the situation, many of them cited the role of education, policy and innovative research as crucial. For example, there were calls for more support for innovative research to drive sustainable technologies forward, but respondents also suggested that design needs to be valued across society. Some people felt Government should set higher design standards and that this would drive innovation; others suggested it was the role of the education system to ensure everyone in society has an understanding of how design affects their quality of life. The diversity of the profession was also raised as a possible barrier to innovation. These responses are typical:

“While some companies operate at the forefront of the industry internationally I feel that overall we are falling behind due to lack of investment in research and the adoption of new practices.”

¹⁰ 263 answered this question and 122 skipped it.

“More education about the benefits of good, innovative design. Government policy which encourages/offers incentives to developers, contractors and architects to produce good sustainable design.”

“Better quality design required for planning”

“Promote design and architecture in education across all ages.”

Government can help create the conditions for innovation by helping to set up a better functioning marketplace. This can be achieved by:

1. Establishing a Design Quality Task Force to review Government policies and the impact of design quality
2. Supporting innovation by reviewing tax credits
3. Promoting choice and variety as a client

1. Establishing a Design Quality Task Force to review Government policies and the impact on design quality

Government should establish a Task Force to review Government policies to ensure short-term costs and growth are not being prioritised to the detriment of long-term social value. In pursuing its growth agenda, the Government risks putting long-term social and public costs second to immediate cost cutting.

The Design Quality Task Force should review a range of policy areas to ensure there is a fair balance between current costs and future benefits. Policies and programmes should be adapted where necessary in order to ensure compliance with the Built Environment Design Policy. We would envisage that this would include Government programmes and policy such as:

- New Homes Bonus – a match-funded incentive for councils to build more homes. The RIBA would consider that this policy could be amended to link the delivery of more homes with expectations on the quality of the homes delivered.
- NPPF and viability guidance – as discussed in Q1.2, whilst there is strong policy on design, the RIBA is concerned that the impact of this will be undermined if viability testing fails to consider the long term economic, social and environmental interests of communities as well as developers and landowners.
- Build Now Pay Later – designed to release public land to the private sector. As discussed in our earlier answer to Q1.2, we believe that the disposal of public land should encourage competition on the basis of quality as well as cost.
- Priority Schools Building Programme – the RIBA considers that the reforms to school building procurement represent a retrograde step and fail to reflect how building design can meet future education needs.
- Housing Standards Review - the cost impact assessment for the current Housing Standards Review identifies the cost of different technical housing standards at point of construction but not the long-term value and savings of more secure, energy efficient and quality housing. The types of impact assessments undertaken on new or changing policies need to be reviewed to ensure it does not skew the policy development process away from long-term quality.

- CIL and Section 106 – these forms of local development taxation should be reviewed to ensure they are instruments applied to leverage and ensure quality of new development in the public interest.

Recommendation 19

Government should establish a Design Quality Task Force to review its policies and programmes to ensure short-term costs are not being prioritised to the detriment of long-term social value. Policies and programmes should be adapted where necessary in order to ensure compliance with the Built Environment Design Policy.

2. Supporting innovation by reviewing tax credits

Current tax credits are limited to research leading to an advance in science or technology, but not other advances in understanding.

Government should support architectural innovation by broadening the definition of research which allows architectural practices to claim tax credits for the research and innovation they are already carrying out.

Recommendation 20

Government should support architectural innovation by broadening the definition of research which allows architectural practices to claim tax credits for the research and innovation they are already carrying out.

3. Promoting choice and variety as a client

In addition to changes we suggest in Section 1 as to how Government can become a better client for good architectural and urban design, we also believe Government can do more to bring choice and innovation to the market. This includes adopting procurement methods that are more accessible to SMEs and micro-practices.

Government can promote and support the next generation of architects and built environment designers (the growth layer) by introducing a wildcard scheme to allow smaller practices to tender for public sector contracts, potentially in partnership with contractors with proven track record. Design competitions can also be used more widely to help new practices offer up their design solutions and bring competition and innovation to design proposals.

Recommendation 21

Government should encourage the use of architectural competitions for public construction projects in order to encourage innovation and greater access for small firms.

2.6 What other recommendations would you like to make relating to this particular theme?

To summarise our recommendations as to how to capture the economic benefits of architecture and design, and maximise the UK’s growth potential, we suggest the Government consider:

- Government should establish a Design Quality Task Force to review its policies and programmes (e.g. the NPPF, New Homes Bonus, Build Now Pay Later) to ensure short-term costs are not being prioritised to the detriment of long-term social value. Policies and programmes should be adapted where

necessary in order to ensure compliance with the Built Environment Design Policy.

- Government should support architectural innovation by broadening the definition of research which is allowed for architectural practices to claim tax credits for the research and innovation they are already carrying out.
- Government should encourage the use of architectural competitions for public construction projects in order to encourage innovation and greater access for small firms
- Government should co-fund the RIBA's research programme into the economic value of good design and support the creation and analysis of a national evidence base
- UKTI should establish a Built Environment Forum through which all those with an interest in this sector can more effectively coordinate their efforts. The forum should include representatives from professional institutes organisations.

3. Built to Last? Cultural heritage and the built environment

3.1 *How does architecture and the built environment contribute to our society and its identity? And how should we evaluate this?*

Architecture and the wider built environment can support community cohesion, social, civic and economic engagement and shapes the way we behave and interact with one-another.

The Government must recognise this value and therefore the importance of linking a Built Environment Design Policy to its wider social and cultural objectives. A Built Environment Design Policy should build a case for place; culture and identity. This should not just be about aesthetics but the history and the evolution of community within any given context. These assets must be understood and inform new development and investment.

New development and regeneration should be designed and planned in the context of long-term, sustainable place-making; a process that should seek a holistic understanding between development and urban character. We must understand how to retain the best from the past, building on local assets and distinctiveness whilst adapting places to modern needs and lifestyles. In this context, heritage should be seen as an evolving concept, not a snapshot in time, but a dynamic essence of place that should both transcend and shape change, consolidating community and building identity. By doing this, we will continue to build the cultural brand identity of Britain, that will not only be important for its citizens' wellbeing, but also for continuing to build on the £14bn GDP impact of direct, indirect and induced heritage based tourism.¹¹

In Section 1 of our response, we have illustrated how we think Government should take this opportunity to lead the way in setting an agenda for the future of the built environment. We asked Government to address the balance of sustainability within the NPPF so that it works towards more long-term objectives for quality of place and quality of life. By doing this, the intrinsic value of the built environment can help shape the development of a strong, resilient society built on rich local identity. We believe that a new evidence-based approach to design and place-making, alongside a more meaningful, participatory process to engaging local people in the design process (see our response to Q4.3) would ensure that culture and identity is embedded in development.

3.2 *Do we value heritage, whether historic or modern, evenly across the UK?*

We believe the most important measure is not whether we value heritage evenly across the UK, but whether we have a consistent approach to heritage and conservation that looks to build on culture, character and identity as we shape the future, and evolve our heritage assets.

It is important to ensure that decisions about conserving heritage buildings and the built environment are not merely based on aesthetics and age, but also on their more

¹¹ The Economic Impact of the Heritage Tourism Economy, Oxford Economics, May 2013

intangible contributions to society. We should recognise that our built heritage can be ‘dynamic’ and we should see conservation not only as the preservation of the past, but also as a fundamental part of the future. There should be a clear distinction between our built heritage that can be re-used and thus play a viable role in the future, and those assets which are best described as monuments to the past. The former comprises the majority of cases and should be seen not as ‘museum pieces’ but as an evolving condition, flexible enough to respond to change and adapt to modern need whilst retaining the essence of the past.

Heritage assets should be identified as part of any planning exercise to accommodate new development, whether at a neighbourhood scale or national infrastructure. By establishing and mapping the wide ranging socio-economic value of historic buildings we can maximise their potential to inform change and shape the future.

Guidance underpinning the NPPF should clarify a national approach to heritage as is consistent with any Built Environment Design Policy (Recommendations 23&24)

3.3 *What do we enjoy about older buildings and places that isn’t being provided by much of our contemporary design? How can we bridge the gap between the kind of places that people want to live in and what we build?*

Housing

RIBA has conducted extensive research in order to build a better understanding of the kinds of places people want to live in. *The Case for Space* found that thousands of new homes are failing to provide the space people need. Within the report a YouGov poll asked respondents whether they would choose a newly built home. Key findings in this poll were:

- Only 1 in 4 respondents said they would prefer a home built within the last ten years.
- 60% of respondents who would not consider buying a newly built home said rooms are too small in new homes; 46% said they lack style and 45% were concerned about the lack of space outside
- 69% of people who would buy a new home said that energy efficiency was the most important reason for them
- The top three things people look for when moving home are outside space, the size of the rooms, and proximity to local services.
- People believe that newly built homes fail to provide two of the top three things they are looking for when moving home: the size of rooms and outside space

RIBA also undertook qualitative research with Ipsos MORI, to find what people want and need from homes today; published in 2012 in the report *The Way We Live Now*. The report was based on detailed ethnographic research in which households were filmed in their homes to understand how people lived and behaviour was influenced by housing design, and also through focus groups designed to test the perceptions and attitudes of prospective homebuyers.

Many of the participants in this research said they wanted their home to have ‘Period features’, which at first glance suggests a preference for older properties. When questioned further they revealed that to them, this meant:

- Spacious living area: people discussed wanting a ‘huge living room’ and room for a ‘big settee’
- Large windows: people wanted ‘natural light’ and ‘sash windows’
- High ceilings: people wanted a ‘sense of space’
- Fireplace

New homes could provide 3 of these 4 features, and we would be closer to building homes like the older properties people currently prefer.

The key findings from *The Way We Live Now* were that homes need to have:

- Large windows for natural light, large rooms and high ceilings – these are typically referred to as ‘period features’. A ‘sense of space’
- Large main living area - for social functions such as eating and entertaining and relaxing.
- Layouts which take into account technology used within the home - we want our homes to have enough sockets and storage for technology to enable us to arrange furniture and rooms in different layouts.
- Space for private time away from other members of the household – across all age groups, and especially where generations live together, private space makes an important contribution to our sense of wellbeing within our homes. Noise reduction is also essential.
- Private space outside or access to green public space in urban locations – this is important for wellbeing for all, and particularly crucial for families; parents like a safe place for children to play outside.
- Options for different home layouts. There was no single, standard layout that would cater for all people.
- Long-term and short-term storage for functional items, and for personal possessions
- Dedicated space for domestic utility tasks, such as vacuum cleaners, washing, drying and ironing clothes, storing rubbish and recycling

Recommendation 22

To ensure new homes provide the types of environments people want to live in, the Government should introduce national minimum space and light standards into Building Regulations for new homes, regardless of tenure or location.

Urban realm

Our streets and spaces provide the setting for people’s everyday lives. If we want to translate the delight of older buildings and places into the modern world, we need to embed urban design principles in all new development. There should not be generic solutions, but development that responds to the character and identity of place and considers our everyday experience as much as the practical or financial objectives. Government should embed urban design principles clearly into a Built Environment Design Policy (Recommendation 11) to set out a vision describing how new streets and spaces should provide the types of environments people want.

3.4 How do we make sure that new architecture understands and responds to historic context?

Heritage and planning must be more aligned within central Government. The Planning Minister within DCLG should have a clear remit to consider built

environment heritage as a fundamental part of delivering new development and building new communities.

Alongside this national steer, Government must ensure that Local Planning Authorities have access to the skills and expertise necessary to protect and enhance built heritage. As with planning, cuts in local government, in addition to funding reductions for bodies such as English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund have led to an erosion of skills and capacity in conservation. Expertise is needed not only to identify heritage assets, but to make the best judgements on their re-use and the appropriate design responses within conservation.

Recommendation 23

Government should set out a national approach to built heritage and conservation within a Built Environment Design Policy, linking it to long term sustainability in place-making.

Recommendation 24

Built environment heritage should be embedded within DCLG and adequately supported by Government planning guidance.

3.5 *What is the role for new technologies in conservation to enable older buildings to meet modern needs and to be adapted with less impact on their historic features?*

The re-use of heritage buildings is fundamental to the dynamic approach to heritage we have advocated in Q3.2. Not only can this allow for character and identity of place to be embedded in change and new development, but re-using older buildings is going to prove increasingly fundamental to long-term environmental sustainability. Re-use safeguards the embodied carbon emitted during the production of materials used in those assets, as well as the added carbon and energy costs associated with demolition, waste disposal and the manufacture and transport of new materials for their replacement. These can often outweigh the energy-efficiency benefits of new buildings.

New technology should be a powerful tool for sympathetically prolonging the material, historical and design integrity of built heritage whilst enabling buildings to adapt to modern lifestyles and uses. For example, relatively low-invasive energy efficiency measures like secondary glazing, internal and external wall insulation, low water use and energy lighting fittings, or soft landscaping and rainwater collection, can transform old structures and make them fit for purpose.

However, the use of technology in renovation and retrofit requires skill and expertise to understand the nature of any given heritage asset and how best to identify the modern technological innovations that should be applied. This will inevitably require a bespoke assessment on a case-by-case basis.

To this end Government could explore pilots of technical approaches to renovation and retrofit and assess their effectiveness through post-occupancy evaluation in order to be able to share best practice across industry.

4. Promoting education, outreach and skills

4.1 *What is the potential contribution of built environment education at primary and secondary school level, both as a cultural subject in its own right and as a way of teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and other subjects?*

Both architecture and the wider built environment offer unparalleled opportunities to promote knowledge and creativity. Built environment issues span the arts, sciences and humanities in a unique and multidisciplinary way. They have the potential to reach a broad spectrum of people, engaging them in different ways of learning to satisfy their own individual needs.

In 2011, the Cultural Learning Alliance reported research findings¹² that clearly outline the case for the role arts subjects play in enhancing attainment and understanding across the board. Key research findings include:

1. Learning through arts and culture improves attainment in all subjects
 - Taking part in drama and library activities improves attainment in literacy
 - Taking part in structured music activities improves attainment in maths, early language acquisition and early literacy
 - Schools that integrate arts across the curriculum in America have shown consistently higher average reading and mathematics scores compared to similar schools that do not
2. Participation in structured arts activities increases cognitive abilities
3. Students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree
4. Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment
5. Students who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer and are 20% more likely to vote as young adults

Learning through architecture and the built environment is an effective way of encouraging students' natural curiosity, stimulating their creativity and inspiring them about career possibilities. Whether it is using structures of buildings to help teach mathematics, using maps to explore cities in geography, or working with a brief to design a building in design technology, there is a wide range of ways in which architecture and the built environment can support learning both inside and outside of the classroom.

Through using architecture and the built environment to teach the curriculum at school, young people:

- Begin to think differently about a wide range of curriculum subjects and become inspired to develop their own skills in finding solutions to practical problems, engaging with schoolwork or respond to creative challenges
- Have the opportunity to learn about the value of good design and give them the skills to communicate their ideas and opinions about the world around them.

¹² *The Case for Cultural Learning: Key Research Findings*, Cultural Learning Alliance, 2011

- Learn more about their local area and embed pride of place, helping to create more cohesive communities with a better sense of how our environment impacts everyone and thus developing an interest in preserving it
- Are better supported to gain knowledge and skills needed for future employment in the construction industry whilst developing key transferrable skills for alternate fields, having long term economic benefits for the UK.
- Have a better understanding of what architects and construction industry professionals do and how to become involved in the industry, challenging common misconceptions about the type of people who can be architects and promoting wider diversity within the industry as a whole.
- Enhance their understanding of an increasingly complex, global and urban world to prepare them for the challenges their generation might face, such as climate change or to introduce them to the potential of working abroad in other cultures
- Develop self-confidence
- Relate their in-school learning to real-life situations encouraging better engagement and interest in higher attainment
- Develop all round cognitive, language and social development

For teachers, the city - architecture and the built environment - is essentially a free toolkit they can use to support their teaching and demonstrate its relevance to the world in which we live for their students.

Using learning about engineering, architecture and the built environment to deliver the core curriculum from primary through to secondary education also has the potential to improve the understanding and appreciation of the built environment across a more diverse section of the population than tertiary education can achieve alone. This can, in turn, support greater diversity amongst those entering into built environment professions and improve social mobility.

4.2 *What is the role of architecture and the built environment in enabling a better public understanding of issues related to sustainability and the environment?*

The built environment is responsible for almost half of the UK's carbon emissions. To meet the government's ambitious carbon reduction targets, everyone needs to understand the environmental impact of our growing, ageing and increasingly urban global population. People can begin to understand these big, often abstract issues, through the buildings and places that they use every day and the built environment has an essential role to play in increasing awareness and communicating solutions to our biggest challenges through new approaches to design and the way this alters our behaviour as necessary. With architecture and the built environment firmly rooted within the curriculum, we stand a better chance of galvanising efforts to meet carbon targets, giving the general public a better understanding of what the issues are, what must be done, and what they can do to help from, all from an early age.

Young people should also be more involved in design decisions to help produce inspiring buildings that meet practical needs and are enjoyed and respected. Young people themselves will, therefore, be playing a part in defining the changes to the world they inhabit and taking these lessons with them through later life.

What the RIBA are doing to support public understanding

RIBA's work includes:

- programmes that partner architects with teachers to develop curriculum linked investigations for students in different subject areas
- local history projects with schools using the RIBA's collections
- projects with community groups to enable them to promote the history and value of their local built environment
- family workshop for parents to learn alongside their children about architecture and the built environment
- careers sessions for young people, skills development workshops, research-based workshops for university groups and opportunities for life-long learners.

Feedback from RIBA education programming has been overwhelmingly positive, however, it is time we offered more. This year alone the RIBA have set up a number of new programmes to give people of every age group the opportunity to find out more about architecture and the built environment. Examples include:

- 'Architects in Residence' project created partnerships between professional practice and schools to give students the opportunity to work on design projects at Key Stage 3,
- 'Young Heritage Ambassadors' which engaged young people in Tottenham and Croydon in creative workshops to investigate and understand their local area with a view to instilling skills and confidence following the London riots of 2011)

RIBA's vision for the future is to extend the overall offer for all age groups and provide new support for teachers and students by offering a comprehensive programme for schools across Key stage 2-5. This would include:

- hands-on workshops onsite at the RIBA's two study rooms
- developing downloadable resources and toolkits for teacher and students to use in-class
- teacher training and CPD opportunities
- study days and schools debates
- partnerships with local schools and business and opportunities for RIBA members to share their knowledge and expertise with teachers and students.

Our vision will take full advantage of the RIBA's new gallery space due to open in 2014, the organisation's plans to create new education spaces within the existing building, and the network of RIBA's regional offices around the UK.

Recommendation 25

Government should work with RIBA and other providers to develop national curriculum materials that use the built environment and its design to enable teachers to teach core subjects in a way which engages students with their local buildings and communities.

Recommendation 26

Government should work with the RIBA and other organisations to support a national Cultural Professions Partnership Programme. This programme should bring creative practitioners and representatives of key cultural institutions into schools to work with teaching staff in supporting delivery of education relating to built environment design.

4.3 How can high standards of design be achieved and promoted through neighbourhood plans?

Meaningful community engagement

Community participation in the design and planning processes has a wide range of benefits and, if done correctly, can raise design standards at a very local level. New developments should more accurately reflect and respond to the needs of the people who will, ultimately, use them. Furthermore, community participation in planning can provide a wider social benefit of bringing people together to engage in collaborative and pro-active dialogue about priorities and decisions concerning their area.

However, creating good quality places through a more participative planning process will only really be brought about with the right support, expertise and direction. The relationship between design professionals and local people must be meaningful. Communities should be engaged in a genuine participatory process to explore potential futures for their area. The RIBA set out principles for meaningful community engagement within its Guide to Localism Series – Part 2: [Getting Community Engagement Right](#).

Meaningful community engagement is a very distinct concept to ‘community consultation’; it involves fostering a two-way learning relationship between communities and necessary professional support. Capacity should be built both within the local population around issues of the planning and design process, whilst also giving professionals a better understanding of the needs of the people they are designing and planning with.

Neighbourhood planning

The current framework for neighbourhood planning is not adequately delivering a robust, meaningful participatory design process. Communities have been left largely unsupported and local authorities are often unable to provide the guidance and expertise needed to realise the full potential benefits of neighbourhood planning. This has – with notable exceptions – ensured that high quality neighbourhood planning is the preserve of those communities with the greatest means. The process of engaging local people must be inclusive and seek to engage those traditionally overlooked, socially excluded in some way, or seemingly apathetic or disengaged with the process.

It is imperative that neighbourhood planning engages with a thorough cross-section of the community and is a tool that is available to even the most deprived or complex areas in some form.

The Government must ensure that the current structures are strengthened, more accessible and have greater meaning. This means properly integrating neighbourhood planning within the local plan process and providing mechanisms through which communities can access appropriate expertise and support. This financial and design support will enable communities to meaningfully participate in localised, democratic

plan making. It will also help up-skill communities and foster a sense of local ownership.

Further analysis and policy recommendations on neighbourhood planning can be found in the 2012 RIBA/Respublica report [Re-thinking Neighbourhood planning: from consultation to collaboration](#).

Recommendation 27

The Government must increase long-term support for Locality, or other appropriate vehicles such as the Design Network, to deliver an adequate programme of design enabling and expertise alongside the practicalities of ensuring Neighbourhood Plans come to fruition and are adopted.

Recommendation 28

Guidance should be provided to Local Authorities on how to embed neighbourhood planning as part of the Local Planning process and training in how to enable the right engagement process between communities and design professionals.

Recommendation 29

The Government should make a requirement that all neighbourhood plans over a defined threshold should be assessed by a design review panel at an appropriate point in their development. The panel should be established in accordance with *Design Review: Principles and Practice* and could operate as a hybrid panel, involving representatives from the community.

4.4 How can we better ensure that awareness and support of high standards of design are shared among all the professions concerned with architecture, the built environment, and quality places?

There must be recognition from Government as to the value of high standards of design in delivering quality of life and prosperity. In this respect we need adequate guidance concerning the delivery of the design aspirations set out within the NPPF – we are yet to see if the Planning Guidance Review led by Lord Taylor will provide a suite of guidance robust enough to demonstrate this commitment.

Government must also ensure that a Built Environment Design Policy it is well supported by an appropriate framework of outreach and guidance. These structures are common in the countries of North-Western Europe, whose delivery of policies on design of the built environment are both ambitious and successful.

Recommendation 30

Government should support a forum to develop original research and deliver training across the construction sector in line with the aspirations set out within the Built Environment Design Policy and guidance concerning delivery of the NPPF.

4.5 How can we ensure fair accessibility and better preparation for those wishing to enter into higher education and the built environment professions?

Many schools careers services have little to no knowledge to usefully advise students on careers in architecture and the built environment. Students should be brought into contact with professionals in the field from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders to act as positive role models to promote careers in this area.

Direct contact with industry professionals, current students, course providers and students from different universities gives young people the understanding of the practicalities for how to reach university, for example: how to prepare portfolios, skills to focus on practicing, and other areas of preparation that might be required.

The contribution of careers guidance to social mobility - breaking down existing gender, ethnicity and class barriers - has been well argued. The Milburn report 2012¹³ uncovered a series of practical barriers that prevented fair access to a professional career: unfocused choices, artificial barriers between vocational and academic education, unfair university admissions, limited work experience opportunities, non-transparent internships, antiquated recruitment processes, inflexible entry routes. It recommended action to break down those barriers in order to make a professional career more genuinely meritocratic.

Better education regarding the built environment, supported by improvements in national careers advice will help to address this and raise awareness of the employment opportunities across the industry. By encouraging more diversity in the construction industry, we can address the serious skills shortage in Britain outlined in the Leitch Review of Skills 2006¹⁴. Construction needs to become more representative of the total labour available to recruit and develop the most talented people, however, the construction industry has a poor record of employing people who are from underrepresented groups: 13.5 per cent are women, 2 per cent are from black, Asian and ethnic minority groups, 14 per cent have some form of impairment¹⁵.

Please see Recommendations 25 (national curriculum materials) and 26 (Cultural Professions Partnership Programme) for our proposed solutions.

Diversity in Architecture specifically

The contrast between architecture, law and medicine and dentistry is stark: compared with 18 per cent in architecture, 28 per cent of first degree students in law and 31 per cent in medicine & dentistry are non-white¹⁶.

The same is true of the number of women in the profession. While more than half (53.5 per cent) of all first degree students are female, this is true of only a quarter (26.5 per cent) of architecture students. In sharp contrast, there are more than twice as

¹³ *Fair Access to Professional Careers*, A Progress Report by the Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty, Milburn, L. 2012

¹⁴ *Prosperity for all in the Global Economy – World Class Skills*, Final Report of the Leitch Review of Skills, Leitch, S. 2006

¹⁵ *Gathering and Reviewing Data on Diversity in Construction Professionals*, A UWE report for the Construction Industry Council and Construction Skills, de Graft-Johnson et al, 2009

¹⁶ *Architecture and Race: A study of Black and Minority Ethnic Students in the Profession*, Barnes et al, 2002

many female students in law (59.5 per cent) and in medicine & dentistry (53.1 per cent)¹⁷.

Only 15% of UK RIBA Chartered Members are women where 51% of architects' 'consumers' are women¹⁸.

Access to tertiary education in the built environment is becoming increasingly economically unattainable for many. With tuition fees rising to an expected £9,000 per year, as well as the added costs associated with studying architecture: printing, materials and field trips, not to mention books and living expenses, students can expect to graduate with debts of around £80,000 or more¹⁹ – at a time when there are few job opportunities in the profession.

Additional support for pre-university architecture students in the form of summer schools, mentoring, structured work placements and networking opportunities have the potential to level the playing field and support access to the profession by a more diverse range of students.

Once working within the industry, people from underrepresented groups, including women, can currently expect to experience professional inequality. The national average gender pay gap is 9.6%, in construction this rises to 17% and in architecture it rises again to 26%²⁰.

Retention in the profession is also an issue. Only about two per cent of practising architects are from minority ethnic backgrounds²¹. Compared to their position at the entry level, minority ethnic students are not represented well at the advanced stages of training and professional practice²².

The Farrell Review should look to encourage the wider construction industry to review the culture and values which are currently precluding access to the profession for a great number of people and putting the industry at a competitive disadvantage. By encouraging a diverse workforce, where people can be themselves, organisations can become more creative and flexible. This in turn makes it easier for them to respond to the needs of their customers and clients.

A workforce reflecting the community it works in is best placed to reflect clients' needs and wants and so can offer better solutions and customer service. A diverse workforce provides practices with a broader set of skills and abilities to compete in and serve international markets.

¹⁷ *Architecture and Race: A study of Black and Minority Ethnic Students in the Profession*, Barnes et al, 2002

¹⁸ *The Business Case for Diversity in Practice*, RIBA Business case guidance notes, Sinha, S. 2012

¹⁹ Pavilion of Protest at the RIBA, ZAP architecture, 2011 http://www.zaparchitecture.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/AJonline_041111.pdf

²⁰ Office for National Statistics

²¹ Architects Employment and Earning Survey, RIBA, 2001

²² *Architecture and Race: A study of Black and Minority Ethnic Students in the Profession*, Barnes et al, 2002