

13<sup>th</sup> March 2008



**Architecture+DesignScotland**  
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Fiona McLellan  
Financial Partnerships Unit  
Scottish Government  
3B Bridge  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburg  
EH6 6QQ

Bakehouse Close  
146 Canongate  
Edinburgh EH8 8DD UK

[www.ads.org.uk](http://www.ads.org.uk)  
[info@ads.org.uk](mailto:info@ads.org.uk)

T +44 (0)131 556 6699  
F +44 (0)131 556 6633

Architecture and Design Scotland is incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private limited Company. Company No SC267870.

Dear Ms McLellan

### **A+DS Response to Scottish Futures Trust: Consultation Paper**

The most successful countries place high value on their buildings and on the spaces between their buildings. They recognize that good buildings and public spaces enhance the quality of life for both citizens and visitors and provide attractive environments in which to do business. As the champion for good architecture, design and planning in the built environment, Architecture and Design Scotland performs an important supporting role in the delivery of the Government's objectives for a healthier, wealthier and fairer, smarter, safer and stronger and a greener Scotland.

A good quality built environment fosters a confident, effective and cultured society and delivers many benefits. Architecture and Design Scotland has a specific interest, and significant expertise, in achieving best value from infrastructure investment programmes. We therefore welcome the opportunity to comment on the Scottish Government's Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) initiative.

Architecture and Design Scotland would endorse many of the statements included in the early paragraphs of the consultation paper, and would accept that a pragmatic approach needs to be adopted in which the best aspects of existing processes can be retained and evolved. However, if the SFT is to be developed as an alternative mechanism for capital funding, it needs to ensure that it will deliver projects and places of quality, by having regard to the range of issues outlined below. Further information on the intended operation of the Trust would be needed, before a more developed assessment could be made.

At this stage, Architecture and Design Scotland has particular concerns about '*using a greater degree of standardisation based on exemplar, energy efficient, sustainable designs to meet public authority requirements.*' (question 4). While there are undoubted benefits in understanding why certain designs perform better than others and disseminating this information widely, every project contributes to the quality of an individual place and should be seen as a unique response to a particular set of circumstances pertaining to that place and the people involved. We recognize that there can be some benefits and economies of scale in appropriately repeating small components of a design. However, larger scale repetition and the commissioning of 'clone' buildings across Scotland is contrary to the principles contained in The Policy on Architecture and Designing Places and A+DS would oppose such a proposal.

Capital investment produces new building and infrastructure projects. These shape our environment, by creating new places and changing existing places. It is important that the significant impact of projects on places and on people is recognised, and that **projects of quality** are produced: end products of the investment process that enhance and promote a feeling of well-being together with respect for, pride in and a responsible and caring attitude to these places. This will make the places of Scotland better, and Scotland a better place. Its attractiveness to visitors, and the economic benefits that this brings, will be increased. For all of these reasons we need procurement processes, and methods of funding capital investment projects, that deliver **places of quality**.

Conversely, failure to recognise and capitalise upon the broader potential of our investment results in additional expenditure by producing, for example, residential areas that no-one wants to live in; buildings where inefficiency, illness or crime increases running costs; and, ultimately, a requirement for new capital investment to demolish and re-build these facilities.

As our recently published Annual Report sets out we do not consider that Scotland is getting the best value from new developments in the built environment. We therefore welcome the initiative to develop a better way of funding infrastructure investment and see the consultation on the role of a Scottish Futures Trust as a timely opportunity for the Scottish Government to bring design quality to the fore in public procurement. Indeed, there are real opportunities emerging for a more joined up approach on design, placemaking and building standards through the newly-created Directorate for the Built Environment, with whom we are working closely. We advocate that in whatever method of funding is adopted, there is an assessment of how these methods, and their associated procurement processes, affect the delivery of a sustainable product of long term value both to the service it embodies and the wider community. It is the prominence and delivery of such qualitative aspects through current processes that we address below and on which we offer our expertise and assistance as the national champion for good architecture, design and planning in the built environment.

We recommend that the development of new funding and procurement methodologies should be tested against the following three broad principles:

### **1.0 Policy and delivery should be linked.**

Policy makers, and those with an overarching responsibility for the delivery of design quality by the Scottish Government<sup>1</sup>, should be accountable for the delivery, by public bodies, of such quality. Their responsibility should go beyond the production of guidance and to include responsibility for the impact that guidance has on investment. They should monitor the outcomes of procurement and report on their success in improving the built environment through all the mechanisms that influence procurement across the sectors.

### **2.0 Public leadership of procurement processes.**

Public procurement should value and deliver well designed environments that support our communities and public services and thus realise the full potential of capital investment. From our work and involvement in projects we note the following areas for improvement:

- Client bodies need to recognise and understand that a development is not **“fit for purpose”** unless it supports the sustainable development of the community in which it sits and the health and wellbeing of users<sup>2</sup>. These broader qualitative issues should be a key objective of the commissioning body, and one in which the public has a voice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Such as Health and Education Directorates, Directorate for the Built Environment and Procurement Groups within the Finance Directorate.

<sup>2</sup> The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 gives a ‘power to advance well-being’. Guidance on this act intrinsically links this power to sustainable, community development through the obligation to achieve best-value.

- The opportunity, through good design, to **increase efficiency** and **reduce the cost** of running a public service needs to be understood and capitalised upon. This will require strategic design skills to be targeted at appropriate points in the procurement process to ensure that the investment realises the broadest and best impact.
- The client body should **control** the execution of the project to ensure that quality is delivered. Transferring responsibility for quality to those less motivated in the wider public interest makes the delivery of these broader objectives more difficult to achieve. Further, reducing the access of the client (and stakeholders) to the designer can be an obstacle to the constructive dialogue that assists designers in responding to the client's needs and aspirations.
- If the public sector client is to take a leadership role in procurement then project teams must be suitably **resourced and trained**. Client teams need to have the skills to plan and control the stages of the process by which it is delivered. This requires leadership at the highest level to ensure that quality is an objective given to the team, but also that senior people within the client team have a **professional design education** (either in-house or consultant design advisors) so that they have the confidence and skills to make judgements on such issues.

### 3.0 Procurement processes should recognise and value design quality.

An understanding of the value and contribution that a well designed environment can make to service delivery<sup>3</sup> and the wellbeing of the wider community is key in effectively targeting investment. We recommend that long-term qualitative objectives for the design and the build quality are given prominence in the following processes:

- **Project Initiation:** the earliest documents describing the required outcomes of the project - the criteria against which the success of the project, and therefore the client team, will be assessed – should include quality as a required outcome.
- **Financial modelling of business cases:** criteria should be developed to allow the value of a well designed environment to be quantified and recognised in financial assessments, particularly in relation to offsetting any revenue costs that may be seen as a bar to capital investment.
- **Project review systems**<sup>4</sup>: these should include an assessment of the potential of the project to deliver an outcome of quality so that long-term best-value can be more readily realised and more properly planned for thus reducing the risk of cost and programme over-runs.
- **Competitive selection procedures:** these currently include assessment of both quality and cost aspects of a bid, however the quality of the end product is often only a small proportion of the total score due to the number of other factors that are included in the quality section. We recommend that design quality be a separate and prominent part in the assessment of bids<sup>5</sup>.

Scotland is special. This specialness is attributable to a number of things, including its people, its culture, its history, and its natural and built environment. Its places are special. Many are of exceptional quality, requiring protection and, occasionally, enhancement. Some are of poor quality, requiring regeneration, renewal and improvement. All need to be cared for, continuously. This requires investment.

---

<sup>3</sup> For example there is compelling evidence that demonstrates that well designed healthcare facilities can speed the healing process and reduce requirements for medication; well designed schools can enhance learning opportunities and reduce truancy; and well designed workplaces can improve individual health and well-being and improve efficiency.

<sup>4</sup> Current review systems (such as Key Stage Reviews carried out by PartnershipsUK for PPP projects or Gateway Reviews by either the Scottish Government or OGC) look at the project management but do not assess the quality of the outcome of the project.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. "quality:cost" ratios would be replaced by "design:delivery:cost" ratios

Accordingly Architecture and Design Scotland would welcome the opportunity to contribute further in the development of new infrastructure investment vehicles, in order to ensure that the undoubted benefit of quality design and place making can be firmly embedded within **all** procurement and funding options available to the public sector.

Yours sincerely

Sebastian Tombs  
**Chief Executive**  
Architecture + Design Scotland