



Architecture+DesignScotland
Aithearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

DESIGN REVIEW: THE PROCESS

What is the design review process?

A+DS wishes to raise the quality of the built environment by securing well designed places and buildings that respect and contribute positively to their settings, promote aspiration and a sense of belonging and use resources sensibly. The design review process, through appraisal and evaluation, assists those responsible for the development of the built environment by offering informed advice on the design quality of proposals. A+DS design review panels are comprised of members with a diverse range of professional skills and experience in the built environment.

Why is the A+DS design review process significant?

Ministers attach great importance to the design review process. The development industry, as well as decision makers on planning applications and appeals, must demonstrate what account has been taken of the views of A+DS.

What kind of projects are reviewed?

A+DS design review panels consider proposals for projects of all types and sizes, but generally they will be projects which:

- are significant because of size or public impact
- are significant because of their location
- set new standards for the future
- raise recurring design issues or problems experienced nationally

They may range from large-scale masterplans to designs for individual buildings. Scottish Planning Policy 20 (SPP 20) provides more detailed guidance on the type of projects on which A+DS's advice should be sought.

How are projects referred to A+DS?

Projects may be referred to A+DS by any member of the project team, including developers, planning consultants, architects and other design professionals, or by planning authorities. Those wishing to refer a project are encouraged to contact A+DS at an early stage, with sufficient information about the nature of the project for design review staff to decide whether it is appropriate for review. To maximise the benefit of the review process, A+DS considers it important that the first review should take place as early as possible in the development of the design, preferably before a planning application is submitted. A+DS cannot guarantee, however, that it will review all projects referred to it.

What happens once a project has been identified for review?

A+DS design review staff will discuss the project with the project team and planning authority and identify an appropriate format and date for review. Prior to any review session, the project team and the planning authority are asked to provide background information so that panellists can be briefed and sufficient material assembled for the review. Wherever reasonably possible, the site will be visited.

What review formats are available?

The review formats are:

- Presentation reviews - involving project team, planning authority and A+DS design review panel
- Desk top reviews - by A+DS design review panel based on material submitted
- Staff reviews - in consultation with at least one A+DS board member

What happens at a presentation review?

On design review days a number of projects are reviewed by up to six panellists, chaired by an A+DS Board Member. Each review session provides an opportunity for the members of the project team to present their proposal and discuss it with the panel. The planning authority and, where appropriate, Historic Scotland will also be represented. The majority of design review meetings are held in Edinburgh or Glasgow, although meetings may also be held in other locations throughout Scotland.

What happens after a review?

A written response will be sent to the primary contact in the project team and to the planning authority. If the proposals are the subject of a current planning application or otherwise in the public domain, the response will be published on A+DS's website and made publicly available. If a planning application has not been submitted, the response will remain confidential and issued only to the project team, planning authority and, if appropriate, Historic Scotland. Those bringing a proposal to review are required to keep A+DS informed of its progress through the planning system, and how the views of A+DS have been taken into account.

Any further questions about the design review process?

Please contact the Design Review team at:

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