

A blue-tinted photograph of three men standing in a field of tall grass. The man on the left is pointing towards the right. The man in the middle has his hand to his chin in a thoughtful pose. The man on the right is looking towards the left with a thoughtful expression.

# Design Review Panel Members: Guidance and Code of Conduct



Architecture+DesignScotland  
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba



# Contents

- 1 A+DS
- 2 The Design Review Programme
- 3 The Design Review Panel
- 4 Meetings and Process
- 5 Panellist Role
- 6 Chair Role
- 7 Attendance and Time Commitment
- 8 Conduct
- 9 Public Service
- 10 Conflicts of Interest
- 11 Confidentiality
- 12 Expenses

Appendices

# Design Review Panel Members: Guidance and Code of Conduct

## 1 A+DS

Architecture + Design Scotland (A+DS) is Scotland's champion for excellence in placemaking, architecture and planning. It is an Executive NDPB of the Scottish Government. A+DS aims to support the creation of places that work, which provide people with real choices and, are ultimately, places where people want to be.

We champion the highest standards in architecture and place making across all sectors, advocating a better understanding of the importance of quality design in both the public and private sectors.

## 2 The Design Review Programme

The Design Review Programme, through a process of appraisal and evaluation, assists those responsible for the development of the built environment by offering informed advice on the design quality of selected proposals at critical points in the design and planning process.

Design Review is a tried and tested process whereby the design quality of selected development proposals are examined by an independent multi-disciplinary team of design experts, who collectively offer a breadth of expertise which may not be available to the project team or planning authority. Design Review Panels assist developers and design teams by providing constructive impartial advice from an external viewpoint, offering support and encouragement for good design intentions, and identifying areas where design quality could be improved at an early stage whilst designs are still being formulated and changes can be made expediently.

Involvement in the process can help planning officers to develop confidence in negotiating design improvements, and assist them in promoting and supporting high quality designs and resisting weak or inappropriate development proposals. Because A+DS panels review projects from all parts of Scotland, the process also provides a means of collecting information about the challenges faced by those aspiring to improve the design quality of our towns and cities.

## 3 The Design Review Panel

The Design Review Panel includes up to 30 individuals who bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to the review process, and can be called upon to attend Design Review Meetings as Panellists. Its members represent a broad variety of design and development professions, but all will have a thorough understanding of design and a track record of achievement in that area, the ability to engage in critical dialogue in a constructive manner, and to express ideas and views positively, clearly and concisely.

New members are selected through an open competitive process on the basis of a written submission and interview. Panel membership continues to be regularly reviewed for quality and balance of skills, and an open invitation to interested parties to apply to become Panellists is maintained with new members appointed as required. Panel members, who are trained and required to sign up to a code of conduct, are appointed initially for a period of two years, and subject to a review

process. They are not remunerated for their time, although expenses may be reimbursed.

A small number of Panel Members are appointed as Design Review Chairs, to manage the Meetings and accurately sum up and communicate the Panel's views at the end of each session.

#### **4 Meetings and Process**

The Design Review process is managed and led by the Head of Design Review supported by a small A+DS staff team. Full Design Review Meetings are held twelve times a year, always on a Tuesday. The dates for these meetings are set well in advance and made available to Design Review Panel Members for their information on an annual basis. Meetings are normally held in A+DS's offices in Edinburgh or Glasgow, with occasional meetings in other parts of Scotland. The meetings usually start at 9.15am and finish around 5.00pm, although times may vary depending on the number and nature of projects being considered. Up to five projects may be reviewed during the day, with each session lasting approximately 1.5 hours.

A presentation review session is normally attended by members of the client and design team, as well as representatives of the planning authority and, where appropriate, partner organisations such as Historic Scotland and SNH. Once a project has been identified for review, an A+DS Design Advisor visits the site and provides briefing material to the Design Review Panel by way of an agenda issued to all Panellists for the session in the week prior to the meeting. The agenda contains a timetable for the day, background information on each of the projects to be reviewed supplied by the planning authority and project team, and details of any prior involvement with A+DS and any issues which may be relevant. It is important that Panellists familiarise themselves with the background to the projects as information contained in the agenda is not normally repeated on the day.

Typically each presentation review session is timetabled as follows:

- 15 minute background briefing by staff
- 5 minute set up by project team
- 20 minute presentation by project team
- 35 minute discussion with Panel and others
- 5 minute sum up by the Chair
- 10 minute internal evaluation

#### **Background briefing**

Prior to the review session staff will provide the Panel with any additional background information not included within the agenda, for example additional contextual information / site photographs, etc. This brief period also allows the Panel to establish whether there are key issues that have already been identified that need to be explored during discussion. Partner organisations if present are also invited to contribute. If the project is one that has been reviewed before by A+DS, Panellists who are not familiar with the project will be made fully aware of any key issues arising from any previous involvement to ensure consistency of approach.

#### **Presentation by Project Team**

The presenting team are invited in and allowed a brief period to set up. The proposal may be presented by power point and / or through boards and models. Following a welcome by the Chair and introductions, declarations of interest are taken from the Panel. The project team is then given 20 minutes to present the project to the Panel.

## **Discussion**

Before any general discussion takes place, the Chair invites partner organisations to briefly make relevant comments, and answer any questions the Panel may have on the planning, environmental or historic context. Panel members are then invited by the Chair to ask questions and express views in turn. The Head of Design Review participates in Design Review meetings as a Panellist, and Design Advisors may also be invited to contribute. Although the discussion is intended to be exploratory and carried out in an informal manner, it is also important that each Panellist expresses his or her views on the proposals clearly and concisely.

## **Sum up**

Following discussion the Chair reiterates the main issues covered and sums up A+DS's views as succinctly as possible. If a Panellist feels that an important issue has not been covered or sufficiently stressed in the summary he/she will be invited to raise it at this stage. The content of the report issued after the meeting will be based on the Panel's views expressed in open discussion, not private thoughts shared after the meeting has concluded.

## **Internal evaluation**

Once the session is concluded the Panel and Chair will take a short time to reflect on the summing up, and agree with staff the content, tone and emphasis that the report should take. Key issues should be clearly defined to provide a framework in which staff can draft a report. Issues not raised during the discussion should not be introduced at this stage.

## **Preparation and distribution of the report**

A+DS staff will prepare a draft report based on the discussion that has taken place and the Chair's summing up. This draft will be circulated to all Panellists, normally within a week of the meeting, for comment by a certain date (normally not less than 3 days). Staff will then amend the report to reflect any feedback. If there has been significant or conflicting comment, a second draft may be sent to the Chair as arbiter for final sign off.

A final report is issued to the project team and planning authority, and other partners where appropriate, normally within three weeks of the Design Review Session. Where the project reviewed is the subject of a current planning application or otherwise in the public realm, the report will be subsequently published on the A+DS website. Other reports are marked 'restricted' and remain confidential. Members of the Panel are sent a copy of the final report.

Not all projects are reviewed within the context of a full Design Review Meeting. Sometimes, because of the complexity of the project to be reviewed, or for issues of timing, a special meeting is held which, though incorporating a presentation by the project team, may be more informal in nature. Panellists may also be asked to support staff in interim review sessions on projects in which A+DS has a continuous involvement, and a full presentation review is not appropriate at each stage. Internal review sessions are also held, either as part of a full design review meeting or specially convened, when the review is based on documents submitted and background information provided by staff. This type of review is most commonly used for returning schemes.

## **5 Panellist Role**

Members of A+DS's Design Review Panel have an important role to play in helping A+DS to achieve its vision of a well-designed sustainable built environment in Scotland of which the nation can be proud. They do this by being active participants and contributing their expert knowledge and advice as one of 4 – 6 panellists

at full presentation review meetings, and either singly or as part of a group at internal review sessions, or in support of staff at less formal interim or desktop reviews. From time to time they may be asked to assist in the design assessment of healthcare projects in support of A+DS's work with Health Facilities Scotland, or contribute to other sectoral panels being developed in conjunction with A+DS's other work programmes. A+DS is also working with local authorities and other partners to develop local design review panels, and will wish to maintain connections with those panels once they are established. Panel members may in future be asked to attend local design review meetings as representatives of the National Panel.

## **6 Chair Role**

The Chair of a Design Review Meeting has a very important role to play. In managing and chairing the meeting, he /she must ensure that sessions are run in a professional and courteous manner and kept to time, and provide the verbal summary of the Panel's views on which the subsequent report will be based. Design Review Reports are prepared by staff and a draft circulated to the Panel for comment, but the Chair is the arbiter of the final draft and should sign it off before issue.

## **7 Attendance and Time Commitment**

The time commitment required of Design Review Panellists is the equivalent of 5 full days per year. Most of this time will be spent attending Design Review sessions, either in full or part day meetings, but Panellists are also required to read agendas and other briefing material prior to a meeting, and will be asked to comment on subsequent draft reports. Attendance at training and workshops where the lessons learned from Design Review are disseminated and captured is also required.

Once Panellists have committed to attend a particular Design Review Meeting they are expected to honour that commitment. Panels are carefully assembled by A+DS staff to ensure that the mix of expertise represented is appropriate to the projects being reviewed, and that continuity is maintained where necessary. Last minute call-offs are disruptive and can compromise the effectiveness of the process.

## **8 Conduct**

The proper conduct of the Design Review process is crucial to the integrity and credibility of A+DS and its Panel. The Design Review Panel, though aiming to be constructive in its comments, on occasion has to deliver messages that may not be welcome to those who receive them. It is critical that Design Review sessions are conducted professionally and that the skills and responsibilities of those presenting the project are respected. Panellists are expected to voice their opinions honestly and clearly, but in a professional and courteous manner. Questions and comment must be brief and concise, but also constructive. Personal opinions related to architectural taste or style should be avoided, as should rhetorical questioning and speech-making.

Punctuality is essential to the smooth running of Design Review meetings and it is important that the Chair and Panel Members adhere to the schedule of the day. Staff will remind the Chair if they feel a session is starting to overrun.

## **9 Public Service**

As a national body in receipt of public funding A+DS takes its responsibility towards public probity seriously. The status and integrity of A+DS is essential if it is to carry influence.

The Scottish public has a high expectation of those who serve on public bodies and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties for the public body. Panellists, like Board members, must meet those expectations by

ensuring that their conduct is above reproach.

The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 provides for Codes of Conduct for local authority councillors and members of relevant public bodies; imposes on councils and relevant public bodies a duty to help their members to comply with the relevant code; and establishes a Standards Commission for Scotland to oversee the new framework and deal with alleged breaches of the codes.

As a member of a public body, it is the responsibility of all Panellists to make sure that he/she is familiar with, and that his/her actions comply with, the provisions of this Code of Conduct. Further information on the Code of Conduct is appended.

## 10 Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of Interest, or perceived conflicts, are a potentially serious risk for A+DS as they could, if not managed well, lead to a significant loss of integrity. Design Review Panel members must complete a Register of Interest Form, to provide A+DS with a list of personal or business interests that might conflict with their role and responsibilities in A+DS, and which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgement. This list should be supplied within one month of appointment, and Panel Members must ensure that it is kept up to date and inform A+DS within one month of a change in circumstances and any amendments that need to be made. A+DS Register of Interests is available to the public to view. Guidance on the Register of Interests Form is appended.

The Design Review programme is more inherently fraught with potential conflicts of interest, real or perceived, than any other part of the organisation. In addition to providing the information described above, members of the Panel, when invited to contribute to a Design Review Meeting, must inform A+DS of any direct or indirect relationship with any company or individual involved in a project to be reviewed as soon as that relationship becomes apparent. Knowledge of or involvement in the same project or one on the same site for an alternative client must also be declared.

If a conflict of interest is deemed to exist then that Panel Member must withdraw from that session, and if apparent well enough in advance may be replaced by another Panellist. In some cases, the relationship may not be deemed a conflict of interest, but one that should be declared. In that case, the Panellist should declare his/her interest at the start of the design review session, and if the Chair should deem that interest to be prejudicial to the impartiality of the review then the panellist must step out of the review.

Examples of potential conflicts of interest that may lead to accusations of undue bias, preference or influence and warrant a declaration or, in some cases, withdrawal from the session include:

- A spouse or partner is employed by a member of the presenting team.
- One of your clients is involved in presenting a scheme in which you are not involved and which is being commissioned from another design team.
- You and a member of the presenting team are both members of an organisation whose membership is not publicly available.
- Your practice was short-listed in a competitive bid for the project that is being presented.
- The site for the project being presented is near to your company's office, your private residence or a site for which you are developing proposals.

It is the responsibility of individual Panel members to declare any potential conflicts as and when they become apparent, and to do so in a timely manner so that the efficiency of the design review process is not compromised. Where a Panel member's involvement in a project is very significant, e.g. as a member of the presenting team, then that Panel member should not take part in any other review session taking place immediately before or after the one in which he /she has an involvement.

Information gained at review must not be used for personal or political purposes, nor should Panel members use the review process to promote their own private interests. Panel members must also comply with A+DS' rules on gifts and hospitality.

## **11 Confidentiality**

Design review is at its most effective when the first review takes place at an early stage in the design process. For projects which are still evolving and have not yet reached the planning application stage A+DS will normally withhold publication of the Report. The importance of confidentiality in the process must be respected by Panel members. Briefing material should not be made available to other parties, neither should the details of Design Review meetings be openly discussed.

A+DS is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act and Panel members should be aware of the implications of this. The Act provides the right of access to information held by Scottish public authorities, like A+DS. For this reason you should be aware, when you write something down be it on paper or in any e-form (e-mail, web etc.), that it could be released through a request under the Act and made public.

For more information on the Act see - [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)

## **12 Expenses**

Design Review Panellists are not remunerated for their time but travel and other costs will be reimbursed as incurred.

Generally travel, accommodation and meals would be organised by the Design Review staff team on a Panellist's behalf. However, there may be occasions where a Panellist has to incur expenses such as hotel accommodation, and travel costs to meetings. As a public body of government, A+DS must adhere to Scottish Government rules for travel and subsistence. Current rates are appended in section iii for reference. Should an expense incurred not be on the list, or for clarification on these or other related matters, please contact the A+DS Corporate Services staff team for advice on 0131 556 6699.



# Appendices

## i. Guidance on the Code of Conduct

You must observe the rules of conduct contained in this Code. It is your personal responsibility to comply with these and review regularly, and at least annually, your personal circumstances with this in mind, particularly when they are subject to change. You must not at any time advocate or encourage any action contrary to the Code of Conduct.

The Code has been developed in line with the key principles listed below and provides additional information on how the principles should be interpreted and applied in practice. The Standards Commission may also issue guidance. No Code can provide for all circumstances and if you are uncertain about how the rules apply, you should seek advice from A+DS.

The general principles upon which this Model Code of Conduct are based are:

<b>Public Service</b>	You have a duty to act in the interests of the public body of which you are a member and in accordance with the core tasks of that body.
<b>Selflessness</b>	You have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. You must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.
<b>Integrity</b>	You must not place yourself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in the performance of your duties.
<b>Objectivity</b>	You must make decisions solely on merit when carrying out public business.
<b>Accountability and Stewardship</b>	You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public. You have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and must ensure that the public body uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.
<b>Openness</b>	You have a duty to be as open as possible about your decisions and actions, giving reasons for your decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
<b>Honesty</b>	You have a duty to act honestly. You must declare any private interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
<b>Leadership</b>	You have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the public body and its members in conducting public business.
<b>Respect</b>	You must respect fellow members of your public body and employees of the body and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times.

You should apply the principles of this code to your dealings with fellow members of the public body and its employees.

## ii. Design Review Panel Members Register of Interests

In accordance with the relevant legislation and best practice, Members of devolved public bodies are required to give notice of their interests under the following headings:

<b>Registerable Interest</b>	<b>Description of Interest</b> (Standards Commission for Scotland <i>Members' Model Code</i> reference <b>Bold</b> )
1. Remuneration	<p><b>Model Code 4.3 - 4.10</b></p> <p>A description of -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Remuneration received by virtue of being -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) employed or self employed;</li> <li>(ii) the holder of an office;</li> <li>(iii) the director of an undertaking;</li> <li>(iv) a partner in a firm; or</li> <li>(v) involved in undertaking a trade, profession, vocation or any other work.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) Any allowance received in relation to the membership of any organisation</li> <li>(c) The name, and registered name if different, and nature of any applicable employer, self-employment, business, undertaking or organisation</li> <li>(d) The nature and regularity of the work that is remunerated and</li> <li>(e) The name of the directorship and the application of the applicable business</li> </ul>
2. Related Undertakings	<p><b>Model Code 4.12 - 4.14</b></p> <p>A description of a directorship that is not itself remunerated, but is of a company or undertaking which is a parent or subsidiary or a company or undertaking which pays remuneration</p>
3. Contracts	<p><b>Model Code 4.15 - 4.16</b></p> <p>A description of the nature and duration, but not the price of, of a contract which is not fully implemented where -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Goods for services are to be provided to, or works are to be executed for, the devolved public body; and</li> <li>(b) Any responsible person has a direct interest, or an indirect interest as a partner, owner or shareholder, director or officer of a business or undertaking, in such goods and services</li> </ul>
4. Houses, Land and Buildings	<p><b>Model Code 4.17 - 4.18</b></p> <p>A description of any rights of ownership or other interests that may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work or operation of the devolved public body</p>
5. Shares and Securities	<p><b>Model Code 4.19 - 4.20</b></p> <p>A description, but not the value, of shares and securities in a company, undertaking or organisation that may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work or operation of the devolved public body</p>
6. Non-Financial Interests	<p><b>Model Code 4.21 - 4.22</b></p> <p>A description of such interests as may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work or operation of the devolved public body, including without prejudice to that generality membership of or office in -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Other public bodies</li> <li>(b) Clubs, societies and organisations</li> <li>(c) Trades unions</li> <li>(d) Voluntary organisations</li> </ul>
7. Gifts and Hospitality	<p>A description of any gifts or hospitality received</p>

### iii. A+DS Travel and Subsistence Rates

Expense claims must be made within 3 months of the costs being incurred as claims made after that date will not be reimbursed. Please note that receipts, if required, must be submitted when making a claim.

<b>Overnight allowances</b>		
Bed and breakfast	up to	£75.00 (receipts required)
Staying with friends		£25.00 (unreceipted)
Meal allowance		£23.10 (unreceipted)
Additional incidental expenses		£5.00 (unreceipted)
<b>Day allowance for Panellist's travelling over 2 hours either way</b>		
Food and soft drinks		£10.70 (unreceipted)
<b>Travel</b>		
Car mileage	per mile	£0.40
Motor cycle	per mile	£0.24
Bicycle	per mile	£0.20
Air travel		generally economy; receipts required
Rail travel		generally standard class; receipts required
Bus travel		receipts required
Underground Travel		receipts required
Taxis		receipts required
Car Parking		receipts where possible
<b>Other</b>		
Hospitality will not be reimbursed without prior knowledge of the Head of Design Review. Telephone calls for landline and mobile phones will be reimbursed on production of itemised bills for essential business calls only.		

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