

Minutes – UDL Sub Regional Meeting: Southern Area, 5 October 2006

MEETING MINUTES – 05.10.06

AGENDA:

1. Item Action
2. Introduction and Apologies
3. Urban Design London – Progress Update
4. Borough Design Update - Key Projects / Initiatives
5. Developing Design Guidance in Sutton
6. RUDI Web site Update
7. Any Other Business
8. Next Meeting

Meeting held at the Phoenix Centre, Mollison Drive, Wallington, SM6 9NZ, 13.00 to 15.00

Present:

Brendon Roberts; Sally Blomfield, LBS
Marc Wolf Cowen, LBR
Esther Kurland, UDL
Caroline Kearey, RBK
Andrew Beedham, LBC
Leigh Land, LBM
Carey Baker, RUDI

Apologies:

Jeff Wilson, LBS

1. Item Action
 - 1.1 Welcome
 - 1.2 Brendon Roberts welcomed the meeting to Sutton.
2. Introductions and Apologies
 - 2.1 For the purpose of those attending for the first time, everybody introduced themselves and the organisation they represented.
 - 2.2 Apologies had been received as detailed above.
3. Urban Design London – Progress Update

3.1 Esther Kurland (EK) provided a brief update on the progress of UDL, specifically with regards to outstanding fees; training; and design champions

3.2 Fee status:

- Merton: commitment to pay from PDG
- Richmond: have paid
- Croydon: commitment to pay from PDG
- Sutton: commitment to pay from PDG
- Kingston: have paid
- Bromley: ? All who haven't paid

3.3 E-Learning:

- Involves TfL funding to provide planning and engineering staff with on-the-job training in design
- Tenders to provide e-learning have been received. However, initial considerations suggest these are very expensive, lacking urban design content, but contain good process / technical proposals

3.4 Seminar programme:

- Comprises 5, hands-on, half-day seminars providing urban design training for people already involved in the built environment, including Councillors and Council Officers, with subjects covering:
 - Introduction to urban design principles
 - Urban design principles in practice
 - Design in a London context
 - Role of the designer in a development project
 - Design and climate change
- Each series of 5 seminars will be held in each UDL region, with an opportunity for each south region borough to host a seminar:
 - Places will be divided amongst the boroughs that have paid their UDL subscription, and the host borough will be allocated any additional places.
 - Croydon expressed an interest to host the first seminar in the beginning of December.
 - Sutton expressed an interest to host the second seminar after Christmas.
 - Kingston expressed an interest to host the third seminar in the new year.
 - Boroughs to volunteer to host the fourth and fifth seminars and if none come forward then boroughs already hosting can host additional seminars.
 - There will be a maximum of 40 places available for each seminar, and boroughs can purchase a full "seminar programme" tailored to their needs, in the future should more spaces be required.
 - Consideration is currently being given to possible accreditation through the Urban Design Group.

LBC, LBS, RBK, All, EK

3.5 Masterclasses:

- The masterclass programme provides detailed design training for approximately 20 to 30 people with a good understanding of the built environment.
- Future masterclass training includes:
 - High density housing provision (TfL) – end of Nov.
 - Streetscape design issues (CABE) – 21 Nov
 - Tall buildings (CABE) – end of Jan.
- Possible training, specifically for development control, could include “design at appeal” and may involve a presentation by CABE and PINS, and could be hosted by Sutton.
- Masterclasses are also being advertised through the UDL newsletter / brochure.

LBS & EK

3.6 Approximately 40 Councillors / Officers are expected to attend the New London Architecture Design Champions event on the 9 October 2006 and will consider several old design review panel schemes according to their design principles and whether they are good or bad examples of design

3.7 Once again, it was noted that a brief update on projects started by Ludo would be useful, including the Greenwich University project and the Street Design Crib Sheet, including how the past streetscape workshop would be taken forward. EK

4. Borough Design Updates – Key projects / initiatives

4.1 Richmond

- Not much change.
- Public Space Design Guide.
- Fairly large streetscape enhancement project.
- Currently producing conservation area character appraisals and management plans for the smaller CAs, as part of a 15 year long review that started with appraisals of the major CAs.
- Design panel is continuing well.

4.2 Kingston

- Currently experiencing issues testing the soundness of the K+20 AAP
- These issues include the process of preparing AAPs; long winded document; creating new policy; and being “too design orientated.”
- RBK currently seeking advice from GoL and Counsel.
- RBK are currently arranging 2-day design training for engineers

4.3 Croydon

- Experiencing various internal political pressures.
- Currently preparing design guides including the scoping for Creating Community Safety SPD & Local List.

- Design Guide; and the review of the house extensions design guide.
- Work continuing on the Mayor of London's 100 squares project for Coulsden.
- Will Alsop has been commissioned to conduct some public relations work within the Croydon Town Centre.
- Croydon currently preparing 2 CA appraisals per year, and feel that English Heritage has, as yet, not provided sufficient guidance on taking forward heritage designation and protection as part of the LDF.

4.4 Merton

- The preparation / review of the Merton Design Guide is being delayed.
- Currently preparing an Historic Environment SPD.
- The final site of the £60K houses scheme has been submitted for pre-application and is liked to be considered by the design panel.
- Currently preparing a public realm strategy.
- Preparing CA appraisals as background evidence for SPDs; however not sure about the management plans.

4.5 Sutton

- Currently preparing an Urban Design SPD.
- Design of Residential Extensions SPD is nearing adoption.
- Designing out Crime adopted.
- Experiencing issues with higher density; characterisation and pressures for designation.
- Suggest having a separate meeting for all UDL South Region members, and possibly other outer London borough's, to discuss ways of defining, identifying and protecting outer London suburban character.
- Also carrying out three CA appraisals and management plans per year. Currently considering the status CA appraisals and management plans and whether to produce these as SPD.

5. Developing design guidance in Sutton LBS

5.1 Brendon Roberts gave a short presentation on Sutton's approach to preparing urban design guidance, which included consideration of:

- Sutton's borough context;
- Current design guidance, including UDP policies and outdated SPG;
- The need for updated design guidance;
- Sutton's emerging design guidance, including the Urban Design Action Plan; Planning Policy; Sustainable Suburbs approach and heritage area reviews;
- Further details on Sutton's emerging Urban Design SPD; and
- Some emerging issues that need to be addressed, such as characterisation and respecting character while promoting modern design techniques.

5.2 Some observations discussed include:

- The approach to delivering higher density development, in accordance with PPS3, that also respects local character;
- The definition of local character that includes the consideration of use; landscaping; connectivity; heritage; layout; form; street patterns; social aspects; accessibility; spatial considerations; links and many others;
- To what extent the Townscape / Streetscape Appraisal was used to define the character of the Borough, being based on the period of development;
- To what extent the London Plan alterations regarding parking and density will be addressed through design policy;
- Interest in the Urbed: Tomorrow's Suburbs: Tools for Making London's Suburbs More Sustainable;
- Poor or mediocre character areas which can be presented by identifying constraints / opportunities on a map;
- Some work on characterisation, being done by English Heritage, may be useful;
- Richmond have also included some characterisation information in the Design Quality SPD, February 2006.

5.3 As a result of the discussion, it was agreed to set up a "characterisation / defining character" workshop, hosted by Sutton, and possibly inviting all outer London suburbs experiencing the same issues LBS.

6. RUDI Web site update.

6.1 Carey Baker, from RUDI, provided a useful update on the changes to the RUDI Web site (www.rudi.net/), including:

- How to access the design resources through the Urban Design London Web site;
- How to use Urban Design London discussion forum, topics and links; and
- How RUDI can be used as a portal for information sharing.

6.2 During a discussion regarding the RUDI Web site, members of UDL were encouraged to use the forum, post links and get involved in some of the discussions. Carey pointed out that RUDI staff checked all posts before going live.

6.3 It was suggested that a newsletter email (possibly the UDL newsletter) could be combined with various events, discussions and latest news on the RUDI website. This could be sent to UDL members and point people to further information, either on the RUDI, UDL or other urban design websites. CB EK

7. Any other business

7.1 Members of UDL were informed of a interwar housing exhibition called "sunshine in suburbia" at the Croydon Clocktower:

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/candd/communication/pressrel/y2006/485096/487711?a=5441>

7. 2 It was suggested that a regular pan-regional UDL meeting would be useful to discuss and hear about what's happening in other UDL regions. EK
7. 3 It was noted that many South London Councillors were attending the Open House training raising the status of design. It was suggested that all design training for Members and Officers should be coordinated to maximise the results.
8. Next meeting
8. 1 The next UDL south meeting will be hosted by Kingston towards the beginning of December 2006. RBK