

(DRAFT)

BRIEFING NOTE

Presentation and Evaluation of proposals at Cambridge City Council Design and Conservation Panel meetings – “the six criteria”

July 2014

Purpose:

This note is prepared for presenters to, and members of, the City Council’s Design and Conservation Panel. The note is the result of a recommendation from the review of the panel which took place in 2013-14 that a standard approach to scheme presentation and assessment was necessary.

It is important for any presenters and their clients who attend the panel to provide only the essential information to enable the panel to evaluate the key design and conservation features of their scheme. In turn, it is important for the panel to use a consistent and predictable set of criteria to guide their assessment and written conclusions to a proposal brought before them. Many of these criterion are used already; in future they should be used consistently for all schemes, though it should be understood that more or less weight will need to be given to certain criterion depending on the type of scheme being presented/evaluated.

The following is not a definitive explanation of the “six criteria”. Rather it provides a series of key aspects, or snapshot of sorts, of each criterion.

Presentation and Evaluation Criteria:

1. Response to context

- a) Presenters need to demonstrate that they have responded to their context and drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of site surroundings
- b) Presenters should identify and respond in a positive way to existing natural, historic or local character
- c) Characteristics of the locale should inform siting, massing, design and material choices

2. Movement and Access

- a) Development needs to be clearly linked to existing routes, ideally as directly as possible
- b) There should be a presumption in favour of walking, cycling and public transport
- c) Parking needs to be well integrated into a scheme.

3. Layout

- a) The design should achieve good interrelations between buildings, routes and spaces
- b) A scheme should achieve attractive built frontages which enhance the townscape and promotes “active” fronts along with natural surveillance
- c) Development should provide distinct public and private spaces that are functional, safe and enjoyable to use

4. Scale and massing

- a) New development should have a positive impact on their setting in terms of scale and mass and contribute to a sense of place
- b) Design of new development should use characteristics of the immediate locality to inform scale and massing

5. Open Space and Landscape

- a) External spaces need to be designed as an integral part of new development
- b) Open spaces and landscape need to relate to the character and function of the spaces and surrounding buildings
- c) Existing positive landscape features should be integrated into new design
- d) Outdoor spaces need to be designed for ease of use by all users

6. Elevations and Materials

- a) New development should have a positive impact in terms of form, materials, detailing, the townscape and immediate and wider views
- b) Buildings should “express” their purpose and be organised so that the most active areas are conveniently located
- c) Buildings should be fully accessible and energy efficient
- d) Necessary services, plant, recycling, cycle and other storage should be successfully integrated into sites and buildings