



accommodate existing desire lines for pedestrian movement? How will the proposal promote the use of public transport and cycling? They ask only those questions that seem relevant, and give the issues the attention that is due according to the proposed scheme's impact and significance.

The officers follow on with Qualityreviewer's questions about space and enclosure; mixed uses and tenures; adaptability and resilience; resources and efficiency; and architecture and townscape. It is not an easy discussion. There will be difficult potential conflicts of opinion and professional perspective to resolve. But by the time the planning application is submitted, the officers – and the councillors who have been involved – all feel that the final development scheme will achieve more for the public interest than they had thought possible.

As for the developer, he sees the planning process as having contributed to his scheme's design quality, rather than having subjected it blindly to a series of unconnected standards, regulations, practices and prejudices. The developer is used to viewing the task of writing a design statement to accompany a planning application as a chore. This time, it is much easier. The design statement has been developing in draft from the start of the project. The site and area appraisal was recorded at the time it was carried out, so now it has only to be accommodated in the design statement. The design principles were carefully thought out, and can now be reproduced in the design statement.

This design and access statement, unlike many others, shows a clear relationship between the appraisal and the design principles, and between the design principles and the final scheme. That constitutes a logical story that the local authority, and anyone else with an interest in the planning application, will find easy to understand.

The aim of Qualityreviewer is to make this sort of logical thinking more common. It was urgently needed when judgments about design were made mainly through the planning process. The need will be even greater if the government succeeds in involving a wider community involved in approving development.

■ Rob Cowan is a director of Urban Design Skills
www.urbandesignskills.com



Qualityreviewer can structure design and access statements, focusing them on the important issues. It can structure planning applications, and provide a clear and simple basis for appraising their design quality ... as for the developer, he sees the planning process as having contributed to his scheme's design quality, rather than having subjected it blindly to a series of unconnected standards, regulations, practices and prejudices

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS...

The Qualityreviewer method explains how to appraise design quality by asking 10 questions. These questions may sound obvious: too often, though, a development proposal goes through the planning process without anyone asking them.

1. What is special about the place?
2. How should policy and guidance be applied?
3. What is the design concept?
4. How significant is the scheme's impact likely to be?
5. What are the design's strengths and weaknesses?
6. Does the design team have the right skills and approach?
7. How can we ensure that the design will be well executed?
8. Is the scheme likely to be well managed and maintained?
9. Do we need more information and advice?
10. Is the design good enough?

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