

## 6. PUBLIC REALM

### *Public Realm*

- 6.1 The public realm refers to all the parts of Glasgow (whether publicly or privately owned), that are widely available for all people to use and enjoy, without charge, twenty-four hours a day. This represents a substantial part of the City's natural and built environment, and includes, but is not limited to its town centres, streets, squares, paths, parks and other open spaces.
- 6.2 The public realm is the space where people spend a high proportion of their time which often gives rise to a strong sense of personal and cultural attachment and public ownership. The public realm is also the part of the City which is most commonly seen by visitors to the City. In these public areas, therefore, the quality of the environment impacts hugely on the image of the City and the public's sense of health, well-being and quality of life, see also SG1 - Placemaking, Part 1, Qualities of Place.
- 6.3 In urban design terms, the design and function of places is fundamental to our understanding and experience of the urban environment as a whole. A high quality public realm can offer significant benefits. It can:
- help to build a clear sense of place and identity;
  - demonstrate a clear sign of civic pride and confidence;
  - provide a common sense of purpose shared by public agencies, local communities and private organisations;
  - help to influence business location decisions;
  - increase the number of tourists; and
  - boost the City's image as a conference and events venue.

- 6.4 The enhancement and ongoing maintenance of Glasgow's public realm should, therefore, be looked on as a sound long term investment for future prosperity, as well as a key pre requisite for creating a desirable place to live.
- 6.5 Public spaces extend across the whole urban area, however, Glasgow City Centre is a major focal point for social interaction and the significance of the City Centre public realm is correspondingly higher; the City Centre is often seen as the public 'face' of the City.
- 6.6 In order to improve the quality of the public realm throughout the City, whilst strengthening Glasgow's unique character and sense of place, new public realm improvements will be expected to be designed with boldness, simplicity of style and elegance, whilst providing inclusive, healthy and safe places for citizens to enjoy.
- 6.7 **Layout and Design** - In addition to the broad open space requirements described in SG1 - Placemaking, Part 1, all proposals for public realm works should:
- improve the provision, layout and comfort of spaces for pedestrian, and where appropriate, cycle flows, taking cognisance of the needs of people with a visual and/or mobility impairment, whilst retaining good accessibility for public transport and other essential vehicles, see also SG1 – Placemaking, Part 2, Detailed Guidance - Inclusive Design;
  - display an integrated approach to the design and siting of street furniture;
  - ensure public artworks and street furniture are installed out of the line of pedestrian and cycle flows, and do not obstruct main shopping thoroughfares, or cause a hazard to people with a visual and/or mobility impairment;
  - respond to cues found in the architecture, public realm and cultural history of the surrounding area, see also SG1 - Placemaking, Part 1, Site and Area Analysis;

- e) incorporate tree planting and soft landscaping, wherever possible, see also SG6 - Green Belt and Green Network;
- f) integrate sustainable drainage solutions, which slow the release of rain waters to the sewer system, see also SG8 - Water Management,
- g) take account of future mass transit proposals, where appropriate (including provision for maintenance and electrical hazard zones); and
- h) be designed to minimise the maintenance burden by using materials that are hardwearing and easy to replace, see also SG1 - Placemaking, Part 2, Detailed Guidance - Building Materials.

6.8 Any improvement to the public realm must find a successful balance between promoting best practice in contemporary design and retaining a harmony with the City's historic environment. This should enable high quality schemes where the design, materials and specification are appropriate to the specific context and location.

6.9 **Materials** - Materials should be carefully chosen to help define street and space hierarchies, spaces of differing functions, public/private spaces and changes in level, see also SG1 - Placemaking, Part 2, Detailed Guidance - Building Materials. The materials used should:

- a) be suited to the character of surrounding buildings, especially where buildings are of special interest or importance or be sympathetic to the natural environment, where relevant;
- b) respond to cues found within the existing built context, where appropriate;
- c) reflect the relative importance of the location;
- d) be durable and robust; and
- e) require minimal maintenance, be capable of maintaining their appearance over time and be easy and cost effective to replace.

6.10 New public realm proposals should:

- a) use a selective palette of good quality robust materials to provide a unifying theme and add a distinctive sense of identity to the locality; and
- b) retain and repair historic street surfaces including setts, paving, and whinstone or granite kerbs across entire streets, lanes or footpath widths (exceptions may be considered where these involve modifications to improve accessibility, for example for wheelchairs)

6.11 **Street Furniture** - Proposals for street furniture should:

- a) allow adequate sight lines (i.e. usually, more than 450mm from the toe of the footpath);
- b) not be located on footways less than three metres wide;
- c) not result in clutter when added to existing street furniture;
- d) display and integrated approach in terms of design and siting i.e. boundary walls, railings, signage, cycle storage or stands etc should all be carefully co-ordinated and integrated into the overall design; and
- e) ensure that cycle storage is located in areas of high visibility

6.12 **Safety and Security** - Proposals for new public realm or proposals that involve upgrading existing public realm will be expected to incorporate crime prevention and community safety measures within the overall layout and design. Using 'Secured by Design' principles, proposals will be expected to provide natural surveillance, visibility and appropriate levels of lighting to help contribute to a safe and secure environment whilst respecting the surrounding context and maintaining pedestrian and cycle permeability, see also SG1 – Placemaking, Part 2, Detailed Guidance - Community Safety.

6.13 Where a significant potential vulnerability to terrorism has been identified, developers must ensure that appropriate counter-terrorism measures are integrated into any associated public

realm. Where appropriate, this could also involve retrofitting existing spaces. Measures should be subtle and may include, for example:

- a) the use of sensitive and imaginative urban design and traffic calming; and
- b) street furniture, planters and appropriate soft landscaping specifically designed to prevent the opportunities for, and minimise the potential for, terrorist attacks.

6.14 All security interventions should be proportionate to demonstrable risk and designed sensitively in order to respect and integrate with surrounding context in particular with regard to personal safety, convenience and the directness of pedestrian and cycle flow. Security fencing in particular should be sensitively designed, of a height proportionate to the demonstrable risk and should be not obstruct legitimate public access. A range of design guides for various types of development is obtainable at:  
[www.securedbydesign.com/http://www.cpni.gov.uk/](http://www.securedbydesign.com/http://www.cpni.gov.uk/)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/crowded-places>  
Protecting Crowded Places: Design and Technical Issues (2012, Home Office).

6.15 **Public Art** - Glasgow has a rich tradition of sculptural decoration of buildings and stained glass, as well as free standing monuments and contemporary works in civic parks and squares. Public art is an important component of Glasgow's built heritage. It can:

- a) contribute to the creation of a sense of place;
- b) stimulate the imagination and invite public reaction and interaction;
- c) be an expression of civic pride and social, cultural and economic confidence; and
- d) enhance buildings, public spaces and the City's image, generally.

6.16 In recognition of the contribution public art can make to the quality of the environment, the Council encourages the integration of high quality art or craft works in the design of the public realm, new development and refurbishment proposals. Artwork should be located in publicly visible or accessible areas.

6.17 Public art includes:

- a) sculpture;
- b) decorative metalwork;
- c) Ceramics;
- d) murals;
- e) stained and etched glass;
- f) decorative paving and landscape design;
- g) street furniture;
- h) water features; and
- i) lighting features.

6.18 Public art should:

- a) respect its context in terms of its scale, form and the use of materials;
- b) use high quality materials which maintain their appearance over time and require minimal maintenance (with the impact of climate and weathering carefully considered);
- c) take account of public safety in the design and choice of materials;
- d) be designed to minimise opportunities for vandalism, fly-posting and graffiti; and
- e) if free standing, not obstruct the footway, cause a hazard to the visually impaired or interfere with vehicle sight lines.

6.19 Public art proposals should clearly identify the organisation/Council service responsible for upkeep and maintenance and have appropriate financial provision for future maintenance and revenue costs.

6.20 The Council is currently producing a new Public Realm Design Guide which will contain further detailed guidance and advice on Glasgow's public realm.

## Lighting

6.21 Lighting is an integral part of the design of the urban environment. The lighting of buildings, streets and spaces increases interest and vitality at night. Lighting can improve ambience and safety and it can help to reinforce a sense of place, see also SG - Placemaking, Part 1.

6.22 Well designed and integrated lighting can:

- a) enhance the quality of the urban environment after dark by helping to reveal texture, accent and tone in the built environment;
- b) aid spatial transition and movement and provide visual cues;
- c) enhance security and influence public perception of safety, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;
- d) positively influence mood and levels of satisfaction and general happiness ;
- e) minimise light pollution;
- f) be an art form in the urban environment;
- g) provide visual drama not possible in daylight;
- h) enhance community space and encourage community interaction;
- i) complement urban regeneration efforts;
- j) highlight Glasgow's unique physical environment and legacy; and
- k) support wider planning, placemaking and urban design aims for the City and enhance Glasgow's image

6.23 Light can be installed as a permanent feature with a perpetual, physical presence. Temporary installations can also be appropriate in relation to one-off events. Lighting can help to redefine and tie people to spaces through the memory of events.

6.24 Urban design has always considered lighting as a key element of spaces. Recent technological advances have, however, provided the opportunity for lighting to play a more prominent role in the promotion of and sense of place after dark. If used innovatively, the use of light can have a key influence on how people perceive Glasgow and it can act as a catalyst for further regeneration to help the City transform its image further.

6.25 To ensure that the design of lighting schemes achieves the objectives identified above and does not impact on the amenity of neighbours or the requirement of species protection and, in relation to architectural lighting installations, protects and enhances architectural and townscape quality, lighting proposals should:

- a) be sympathetic to their context and surroundings;
- b) enhance the appearance of buildings and complement the texture, colour and tone of building materials;
- c) avoid light spillage or glare which would cause a hazard to road traffic, pedestrians or cyclist or a nuisance to neighbours;
- d) be fully integrated and coordinated with the design of new public realm, and where appropriate taking design cues from the surrounding architectural context;
- e) minimise opportunities for vandalism (protective measures must not detract from the visual amenity of the building or surrounding area);
- f) minimise light pollution and carbon footprint (both in terms of design and operation);
- g) be used with discretion where proposals involve the use of coloured light as this is unlikely to be acceptable on listed buildings if it dominates the design (on modern buildings there are fewer constraints and the use of colour, fibre optics and neon may be appropriate and in some instances, the lighting scheme may incorporate, or itself constitute, public art);
- h) conceal light fittings and associated electrical equipment, including cables, from view or ensure that these have minimum visual impact;

- i) take account of maintenance requirements in terms of access to fittings (where fittings require to be mounted on columns, any column must be discreetly located off the public footway);
- j) avoid creating deep shadow in adjacent spaces, especially paths; and
- k) not negatively impact on protected species and habitats (i.e. bat roosts and trees with nesting birds)

6.26 For the erection of security lights mounted on property, see guidance on External Fittings to Buildings.

6.27 **Architectural Lighting** - Most of the lighting schemes in Glasgow have been installed on buildings, monuments and structures of architectural or historic interest using traditional methods of lighting. The aim has been to enhance the architectural character of individual buildings and to reinforce areas of high townscape quality.

6.28 Within traditional sandstone areas, lighting schemes should aim to complement the architectural quality of individual buildings. The light source should be chosen to enhance the colour of the stonework. Coloured light, other than to highlight architectural details, should not be used.

6.29 Modern buildings present different lighting challenges and may require a more innovative approach such as using colour, fibre optics or neon to create character where no distinctive character exists. The lighting scheme may incorporate, or itself constitute, public art.

6.30 The lighting approach adopted for particular buildings will depend on a number of factors, including:

- a) location and setting;
- b) relationship to other illuminated buildings;
- c) skyline impact;
- d) architectural form and detailing; and,
- e) acceptable locations for light fittings.

6.31 Where a building will form part of a group of illuminated buildings, there is a need to ensure that proposals will complement other floodlighting projects (both existing and proposed) and that together they form a visually cohesive group.

6.32 Draft lighting proposals should be tested and refined on site to ensure that the design philosophy is achieved and to resolve any problems which could arise. This should preferably be undertaken prior to letting the main contract.

6.33 The following guidance applies:

## ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING

### Light Source

On most buildings, the colour temperature of the light source should be chosen to complement the colour(s) of the building fabric. As a general rule, the mixing of two or more light sources on the face of a building is not recommended. All elevations should be lit with a consistent light source, i.e. SON, MBI, HQI, etc. A change of light source or selective use of colour, however, may be appropriate where there is a change of material (e.g. a mercury light will highlight the bluish-green qualities of slate roofs or copper domes), or to highlight architectural features.

### Fittings and Control Gear

Fittings, control gear, and cables should be concealed from view as much as possible. Fixings should be non-ferrous to avoid staining and, wherever possible, should use mortar joints to minimise damage to stonework.

Fittings Mounted on the Building - Fittings chosen for visible locations should be as small as possible and be of a uniform shape. Bulky irregular shaped fittings are not appropriate. As a general principle, fittings should be contained within the depth of ledges

and should not appear to 'float' above the ledge level - alterations to the standard bracket arrangements may be required to achieve this. In sensitive locations, sample fittings will require to be viewed on site to assess whether they are acceptable. To reduce visual impact, visible fittings require to be painted in a colour agreed with the Council.

**Fittings Mounted off the Building** - Fittings should preferably be located within the building's curtilage and be concealed in basement wells, behind boundary walls or within soft landscaping. The erection of new columns on which to mount lighting equipment should be avoided. Where columns are necessary, they may be considered as 'development' requiring a formal planning application. New columns should be of minimal height and take advantage of soft landscaping or other features to help conceal them from view. They may also require to be painted in an agreed colour to aid concealment. In certain instances, a building may be lit from fittings mounted on another building, subject to the written agreement of the appropriate building owners.

#### **Potential Glare/Nuisance**

The angle of the light beams should be arranged to ensure that there is no spillage or glare which would cause a hazard to road traffic, pedestrians or cyclists or a nuisance to neighbours. Where the building is in residential use, the lighting must not cause a nuisance to residents.

#### **Vandalism**

Resistance to vandalism in terms of design, location of fittings and protective measures must be carefully considered and be compatible with good aesthetics.

#### **Cables and Cable Routes**

All external cable routes and internal routes in Listed Buildings must

be approved in advance of the contract. Cables should be concealed as much as possible and, on the face of the building, should follow appropriate ledges, mouldings or mortar joints and be tucked tight into corners. Loose wiring and trailing cables are not acceptable. To aid concealment, the preference is for grey uPVC sheathed micc cables to be used, failing which black would be acceptable. The use of orange cable in visible locations is not acceptable.

Vertical cables should, where possible, be internal. If this is not feasible, cables should rise along the least obtrusive route. In visually prominent locations, it is recommended that no more than two uPVC sheathed micc cables rise at any given point. In certain instances, cables may require to be concealed within a coverplate painted to match the building.

Sockets/junction boxes and the connecting cable to the fitting should be concealed from view.

#### **Maintenance**

The design of the lighting scheme should take account of maintenance requirements in terms of access to fittings.

#### **Electricity Supply**

In most instances, the lighting will be connected to the building's own electricity supply. Under special circumstances, however, e.g. when a building is in more than one ownership, an independent supply may be more appropriate. If an electrical supply pillar is required, its location and colour, along with the cable route to the building, must be agreed with the Council.