

RTPI SE Awards 2010

1. Art, Culture & Sport

Dover Sea Sports Centre

This new Sea Sports Centre occupies a prominent location in the town; literally on the beach. It represents the focus of a wider project aimed at improving the appearance of the seafront and providing much needed facilities for sea sports activities.

The early establishment of the Dover Sea Sports Development Trust has provided a focus for a collaborative approach between partners. Drawing on the experience of an earlier proposal, the team carried out an extensive consultation at the outset to gain a full understanding of the needs of those who would use it.

Development of the Sea Sports Centre benefited from a robust pre-application which included the early involvement of CABI and English Heritage. An innovative approach to preparing a design brief was used to help establish what could be achieved within the limitations of the available budget and resolve the potentially conflicting requirements of sports clubs; the planning authority; Harbour Board and statutory agencies such as English Heritage. The team has had to be patient over a number of years to secure the funding necessary to complete the building. The District Council's Planning team has been involved throughout and the Panel has been particularly impressed with their responsive and flexible approach to matching the demands of grant funding streams with the planning process.

The result is a highly successful scheme which has seen sea sports participation amongst young people reach new heights. The addition of a café complete with a balcony with panoramic views has led to the Centre becoming a destination in its own right. The clever use of materials contributes to a building which has enhanced the beach and the seafront listed buildings.

AWARD presented to Steve Major, Simons Group Lincoln, and Peter Wallace of Dover District Council



2. Climate Change

Planning Policies & Technical Guides (Tonbridge & Malling)

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has produced a suite of climate change mitigation and adaptation planning policies and a set of technical guides as a response to tackling climate change at a local level.

The policies, adopted in April 2010, form part of the Local Development Framework and comprise of two policies on mitigation (sustainable design and waste minimisation) and two policies on adaptation (sustainable design and winter water storage). The online technical guides cover three broad areas; renewable technologies, sustainable drainage systems and saving water at home. The guides are technical in nature and are not formal planning documents but have been produced to help applicants address the requirements of sustainable design. In addition, checklists have been drafted for planning applicants and planning officers.

Both the policies and guides sought to tackle how new development can mitigate its impact on climate change and how development can take place in a way that it can adapt to the consequences of future climate change, for example, hotter summers and wetter winters.

The panel felt that good practice had been clearly demonstrated in the soundness of the planning policies based on a robust evidence base and extensive consultation. Furthermore the panel acknowledged how implementation of the policies can be facilitated by appropriate and effective checklists for both applicants and development management officers. It was felt that the policies, guides and checklists would serve as exemplars to others and consequently are worthy of a commendation.

COMMENDATION to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Nature Conservation & Development SPD (Brighton & Hove)

The Nature Conservation and Development SPD provide supplementary planning guidance on the conservation and creation of biodiversity in new development.

It provides a solution to a strong national policy base requiring development to conserve and enhance biodiversity, for which, little information is available about how this general principle can be quantitatively applied to individual developments.

As a local planning authority, Brighton & Hove City Council required a method for calculating the amount of biodiversity new development proposals should provide, in a way that was easy for developers and planners alike to understand and use. Such a tool would help the council to implement biodiversity policies.

The document requires new development to incorporate habitats and features for wildlife, leading to improved 'bio-literacy' and closer interaction between people and wildlife. The net result for the city is new development which will consistently deliver biodiversity conservation objectives, leading to greener urban environments and a better quality of life for local people.

Developments are allocated a number of points, based on the total site area. These points must be accounted for by integrating nature conservation features into the design of the development. A menu of nature conservation

features is listed in the SPD and each feature has a point allocation, based on a standard cost of creating that feature on a development.

The panel felt that this was a practical solution to an area of planning development which is difficult to interpret. It provides a model of innovation on requiring developer contributions to nature conservation enhancement and compensation. It appears to be a well structured open system that has been well adopted in the local authority and provides a role of the ecologist in planning team.

AWARD presented to Matthew Thomas of Brighton & Hove City Council



3. Community Engagement

Graylingwell, Chichester

This was a former 34 ha (85 acre) long stay Victorian hospital in a mature parkland landscape. It is now being developed by Linden Homes and Downland Housing Association for 750 fully integrated mixed occupation homes in what is claimed to be the largest carbon neutral UK development. It consists of playing fields, a chapel, hall, studios, farm shop, convenience store, café, and offices; some in period conversions, totalling over 30,000 sq ft. A listed water tower has been converted and incorporated into an on-site energy centre.

Chichester District Council adopted a pro-active role of extensive community engagement with 360-degree surrounding residents to fully integrate the development within the neighbourhood and the City. Events attracted over 350 residents and the dialogue will continue throughout each phase of development to the ongoing maintenance regime using a Community Trust and community liaison committee to deliver benefits for the whole of Chichester.

The panel felt that the quality of the early results are very promising and may point the way to further award entries in the future. Whilst there is some uncertainty regarding the 100% zero carbon aspiration, they felt that the project provided a successful exemplar of fully collaborative and exhaustive 'Masterplanning' worthy of an Award.

AWARD presented to Sam Cheong of John Thompson & Partners Chichester District Council



4. Equality & Diversity

East Clayton Farm, Bradbury Court

This scheme is an excellent example of a new approach to independent living for young people with profound and multiple disabilities. It includes 8 adaptable flats designed to accommodate the long term needs of young people and is the first shared ownership housing scheme of this type in the UK.

The new accommodation has been provided through the sensitive restoration of former farm buildings and the addition of a new-build extension in a manner which respects the character of the surrounding countryside; now part of the National Park. The living accommodation centres around a courtyard with a glazed walkway providing sheltered and secure access.

Early contact with the planning team at Horsham District Council established that the proposed development was contrary to Core Strategy Policy seeking to protect the then Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) from residential incursion. However, the planning team recognised an acute shortage of this type of accommodation which often leads to young adults from rural areas being placed in accommodation in urban areas. To inform their approach, the planning team took a wider view of the impact of the scheme on the quality of life of young people and applied the Core Strategy's policies aimed at promoting inclusive communities.

The result is an outstanding scheme, carefully designed to provide independent living to meet the needs of young people in a supportive environment. The re-use of existing materials and fixtures combined with sensitive additions has resulted in a cluster of buildings which enhance the locality and sit well in the context of the National Park. The Panel has been very impressed with the collaborative work on the scheme and the imaginative

and yet robust approach of the local planning authority to finding a positive way forward.

**AWARD presented to Graham Doyle of Lee Evans Partnership
Horsham District Council
Lorica Trust**



5. Heritage

Cadlington House, Blendworth

This impressive work by Planning Consultant and other specialists is delivering a high quality result. Kim O'Brien lives just 300 yards from Cadlington House in Blendworth, a listed building, and has often dreamed of returning it to its former glory. Sensitive conversion and attention to detail is evident throughout. The policy stance of East Hampshire District Council on enabling development has been exemplary, to the extent that the Council is pointing out the scheme to other developers and their agents.

Cadlington House is a Grade II Listed Building and it forms a significant feature of the Blendworth Conservation Area. The property was purchased in April 2007. The solution to the problem of financing the project took the form of enabling development in accordance with the guide provided by English Heritage.

The proposals for the refurbishment of Cadlington House and the restoration of other buildings within its curtilage together with two new dwellings which are intended to facilitate the expensive refurbishment works.

The works to the Listed Building began in September 2009 and were completed in March 2010. Other works are underway.

The planning application proposed the change of use of Cadlington House from a 'care home' to three residential units; the restoration and conversion of three existing buildings to create separate dwellings and the erection of two new buildings together with the associated garages, bicycle stores, bin stores. The wall of the walled garden is to be restored in its entirety.

The additional development which was sensitively accommodated in relation

to the main house and the complex of buildings was two new dwellinghouses. One of these was sited centrally within the walled garden drawing upon the symmetric qualities of the space to create a unique modern “ecohouse” with a green roof. The other dwelling took the form of a more traditional farm building drawing upon the historic associations of this part of the site for past farming activities.

**AWARD presented to Bryan Jezeph of Bryan Jezeph Consultancy
C K Estates
East Hampshire District Council
Huw Thomas Associates**



6. Local Regeneration & Renewal (sponsored by Brighton University)

Buckinghamshire New University

Buckinghamshire New University evolved into a large and diverse estate. It included the Queen Alexandra Road Campus in High Wycombe town centre, and outlying campuses at Wellesbourne, Chalfont and John North Halls. A Consolidation Project addressed the constraints caused by the estate, which was no longer fit for purpose.

The Project involved the consolidation and expansion of the QAR Campus and the disposal of the other campuses for development to fund the project. Each brought planning challenges, including the loss of open green space, community and sports facilities, design issues and providing exceptional circumstances to justify development.

BNP Paribas Real Estate advised the University on the Masterplanning and the planning application for a new landmark campus and provided strategic planning advice to support the disposal of the surplus sites. The Planning role was fundamental to the success of the project. It provided the University with the one off opportunity to deliver a new integrated campus and a step change in the quality and operational effectiveness of the University’s estate. It also

supported the University's vision, including its aspirations to achieve high quality design and facilities.

The Consolidation Project involved extensive discussions with Wycombe District Council and Chiltern District Council in respect of BNU's landholdings. This included the preparation of a Masterplan for the development of the town centre QAR Campus and the allocation of surplus land for development through the development plan process.

The panel felt the main building is certainly impressive architecturally, but were mindful that this is a planning award and the role of the planner here was crucial to the success of the project. Consultant planner input included the consolidating of three sites, corporate strategy for the property portfolio, master planning to encourage a vision for integration with the town centre and the removal of barriers to permeability to welcome public to use of facilities.

COMMENDATION presented to John Bowles of BNP Paribas Real Estate Wycombe District Council Chiltern District Council



7. Master Planning

Former Royal Alexandra Hospital Site Planning Brief, Brighton

This prominent corner site within the Conservation Area, which had been in hospital uses since the mid 19th Century, was purchased by a volume house builder at the peak of the housing market in 2006. Following refusal of a redevelopment scheme and its subsequent dismissal at appeal in 2009, the Council decided to prepare a planning brief in consultation with the developer and the local community. This enabled the 2 concerns of conservation and financial viability to be addressed side by side.

During the consultation process 5 options were tested, ranging from total redevelopment to retaining the older buildings and developing at a lower density around them.

3D modelling was used to explain and test the options and the financial assessment of the schemes enabled the need to introduce new elements within the site to be more readily accepted by the community. The resultant brief offers a preferred development approach which is robust and viable. The Council are using this approach in their development management of other areas. The role of planners in the process is especially evident in the consultation exercises, in the development of options and in the commissioning of both a Conservation Assessment and an independent Financial Assessment of the options.

COMMENDATION presented to Gill Thompson and Jo Thompson of Brighton & Hove City Council



8. Planning Process (sponsored by Peak Quality Homes) Implementing Regional Planning in the South East

The Guidance documents represent the highest level of good practice. The RTPI is keen on promoting 'larger than local'.

Following adoption of the South East Plan in May 2009, the focus of the multi-disciplinary planning team turned to its successful implementation through LDFs. In addition to the statutory duty for LDFs to be in 'general conformity' with the RSS, the team devised a series of LDF guides and holding specialist workshops on relatively new or changing areas of local planning (eg economic development, climate change, transport and green infrastructure). The team has gone the extra mile.

Regional spatial strategies are in the process of abolition and the Partnership Board and the regional planning team has been disbanded. Nevertheless the documents are an example to Local Planning Authorities for their strategy work on LDFs in the likely absence of sub-national guidance from coalition government.

AWARD presented to Catriona Riddell and team from South East England Partnership Board



9. Public Realm

Art at the Centre : Slough's new High Street

Slough Borough Council has completed a major piece of public realm in the main shopping street. The scheme was completed in September 2009 and is part of a wider revitalisation project around the town centre. The scheme aims to celebrate Slough's diverse population, with its variety of cultures by creating a high quality and attractive town centre. In addition, it aims to improve traffic management and pedestrian access, enhance the town centre as a business and retail destination and introduce artwork as part of the Council's cultural investment.

This was an interdisciplinary project involving engineers, landscape designers and artists, with the project plan devised and led by a planner. The public were consulted throughout the project and local people were able to comment on the emerging designs at stages when the design options could be influenced.

The result is a transformed high street with colourful artwork, set within a series of public spaces, with new shared surfaces, traffic restricted areas, artist designed seating, floorscapes and light works.

The panel was impressed with the scheme and particularly liked the use of art and culture as an integral part of the design. It was not clear however, whether the scheme has enhanced the town centre as a business and retail centre; perhaps this will become more apparent when the wider regeneration project has been completed. Overall the panel felt the scheme had transformed the high street and reflected and celebrated the multi cultural nature of Slough.

COMMENDATION presented to Roger Kirkham of Slough Borough Council



10. Spatial Strategy (sponsored by Adams Hendry)

Wokingham's Core Strategy

Again the Panel welcomed a joint member and officer presentation. Against a background of many years resisting further development, this work marked a new approach to the acceptance of housing growth provided suitable infrastructure could be secured through direct on site provision and through appropriate developer contributions.

4 locations emerged from an initial analysis of options. The capacity of these varied between 1,500 and 3,500 dwellings, as did the form of the likely development and the infrastructure needs both on and off site.

A single unit formula was devised to form the basis for Section 106 developer contributions covering an extensive range of elements and to give transparent and clear guidance to prospective developers and assist with greenfield land valuations. The guidance includes provision for 'open book' analysis in the event of any difficulties arising over viability.

The Panel felt that, whilst this task may be a first for Wokingham, the work involved did not represent an innovative approach. It did nevertheless embody good planning practice that would serve as an exemplar to others.

COMMENDATION presented to Councillor Angus Ross and colleagues of Wokingham Borough Council



11. Sustainable Communities (sponsored by Reading University)

Marriott's Walk, Witney, Oxfordshire

In 1988 the Woolgate shopping centre in Witney won the RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup for planning achievement. That scheme has stood the test of time and has integrated well with the historic town centre.

Faced with a similar edge of centre site which had been the focus of Supermarket developer interest, West Oxford District Council embarked upon a widespread community consultation to find out what local people wanted to see the site developed for. The response was a desire to see a cinema, green space, a children's play area and additional free car parking. The Council drew up a development brief which set out these requirements as part of the development package. Six schemes were shortlisted for further consultation and the final successful scheme was commenced in 2007 and completed in 2009.

The result is a mixed use development comprising retail, housing, and leisure with ample free car parking in a well integrated decked car park.

The planners played key coordinating and facilitating roles in the management and control of the project. The project team was headed by a planner and the development aspects were led by the Area Development Manager. Planners captured the public views, translated these into a workable vision and were then present to oversee the implementation of the scheme.

Overall the development is a high quality one, which is to be expected in, and adjacent to the core of an historic market town. There is a good balance to the mix and disposition of the uses, and in the architectural styles which range from modern to an element of pastiche.

AWARD presented to Phil Shaw of West Oxfordshire District Council



The OVERALL JOINT WINNERS of RTPI South East's Annual Awards were :
Cadlington House and East Clayton Farm

