

CROYDON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL



GUIDEBOOK 2023

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*NOTE: Please note that the Terms of Reference document and Pre-application Customer Advice Note must be read and understood in conjunction with this summary guide. Further information can be downloaded from:
www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration*

INTRODUCTION

The independent, multidisciplinary and high calibre Design Review Panel (DRP) provides an additional specialist service within the pre-application service offered by the Council. It is an important step in elevating the quality of Croydon's built environment and creating a destination of choice in London & the south east.

It continues the Council's commitment to deliver places and design of the highest standards. With an increasing number of high profile development proposals coming forward across the borough and a major uplift in the number of pre-application submissions and planning applications being received, the panel provides a vital step in ensuring this development cycle leaves a legacy of places that will be loved and admired by residents and visitors alike.

The panel will provide independent, expert advice on projects relating to all aspects Croydon's built environment, including but not limited to major development schemes as part of the significant regeneration and growth of the Borough; infrastructure and highways schemes; parks; street furniture, public realm projects and civic spaces.

In line with the recommendations of the Farrell Review and National Planning Policy Framework, the panel will complement the proactive and award winning services already provided by the Council's planning service, and further ramp up the quality of design

and delivery that will be expected from developers.

Over the last few years, Croydon Council undertook the task of developing a series of coordinated, delivery focused technical masterplans. Croydon's spatial planning teams used a radically pragmatic placemaking approach to create these plans – an approach that was strategically driven but locally informed.

These plans built on the dreams of past visions, however, were guided by the intention to turn concepts into robust and collaboratively delivered development schemes and public realm projects. This provided an important backdrop of strategic clarity and confidence for developers, investors, businesses and the community. They set the framework for Croydon's evolution as a place that can accommodate substantial growth in the next 20 years, enhancing and supporting the best of what is already there and complementing this with new developments and projects to enable a thriving, resilient, diverse place. Acting as a gateway to planning committee, the design review panel further elevates this.

The panel will scrutinise and verify the design quality, and send clear message out to the development industry that Croydon expects and aims for the very highest quality when it comes to its built environment.

CROYDON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

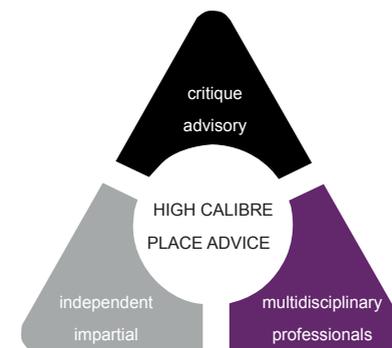
Why is a Design Review Panel important to Croydon?

Croydon has long been known as a major commercial centre with excellent connectivity. Despite this people have tended to go through Croydon rather than to Croydon, with other places in London considered to be more attractive to live, work and socialise.

Action though, is now rapidly underway to and develop Croydon and in particular people's perception of this busy, vibrant centre - central to this is the Council's impartial, locally informed and multidisciplinary Design Review Panel.

The panel provides a specialist service to help elevate the quality of its built environment and continuing its commitment to deliver places and design of the highest standards.

Over **£5 billion** of recent developments have been driven by the aim of creating a destination of choice for current and future Croydonians; a **LOCALLY SENSITIVE, INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL** will help further this aspiration as well as promote a more proactive planning process.



PANEL STRUCTURE

How will the Design Review Panel be structured?

The leading industry experts who form the panel include **31 PANELLISTS & 4 CHAIRS**, encompassing expertise in planning, landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, conservation, engineering, placemaking, culture, public art and regeneration.

Each review day will consist of 1 chair and normally up to 5 panellists, selected from the pool of 31 panellists and 4 chairs. The selection will be based on the expertise and specialist skills required for the projects being reviewed that day (see below diagram).

The panel commenced in 2016 and was refreshed in Sept 2023. It will be reviewed every year and refreshed after the four-year term or as required.

Each new panel will be required to attend two briefing days to gain a thorough understanding of the local context.

AGMs will take place with Council Officers, Chair of the Planning Committee (or delegated representative) and other key stakeholders. This meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss major applications in development that are due for review, provide updates on recently reviewed schemes and evaluate the panel processes, structure and applicant feedback. It is anticipated that there may be occasional meetings with review panel chairs, key Council officers, chair of the planning committee and relevant stakeholders. The frequency of this will be subject to caseload.

4 Chairs (1 chair/review)
31 Panellists (normally up to 5 panellists/review)

1 Review Day per month

Reviewed + Refreshed
 Every **4 Years**

up to 3 Schemes per Review Day

AGM Review
 review of panel processes and schemes in pipeline

First Review
 £4500 + VAT
Follow-up Review
 £4000 + VAT (same for post submission reviews)

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

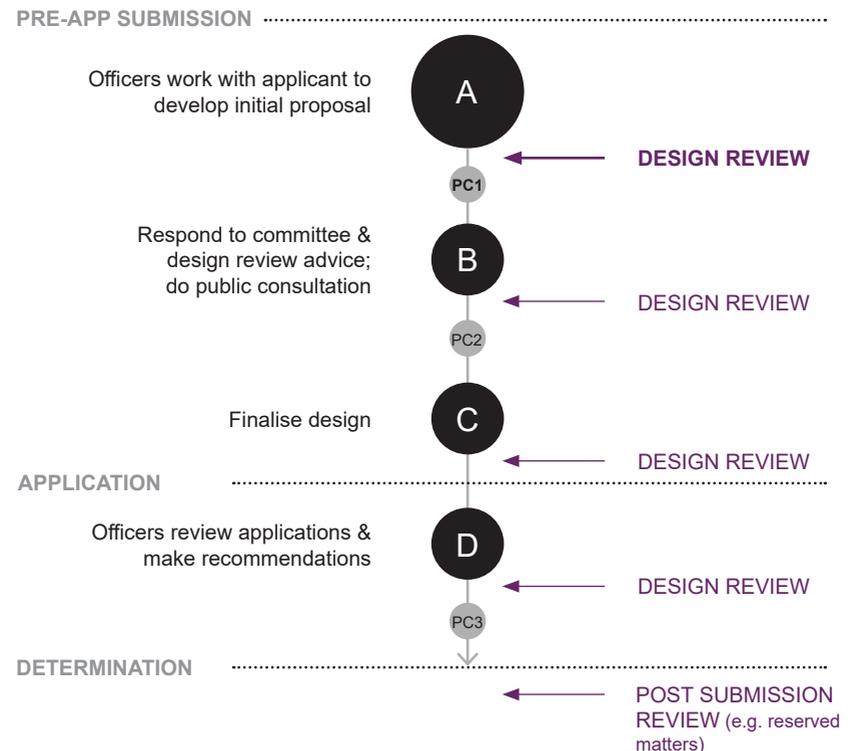
How will the Design Review Panel fit into the planning process?

The Design Review Panel will act as an important independent quality check during the pre-application process.

Subsequent reviews prior to other planning committee meetings and post-submission reviews may be advisable, but may not be necessary depending on the scale and complexity of the scheme.

The first design review will be highly recommended for major and strategic schemes prior to the first presentation to the planning committee, acting as a **GATEWAY** to it.

The below diagram illustrates how the Design Reviews will fit within the planning process.



REVIEW SESSION STRUCTURE

How will a Review Session be structured?

There will typically be one review day per month. This will be held on the same day every month where possible, and a three month tentative programme will be circulated upon the establishment of the panel. Up to three schemes will be reviewed on each review day.

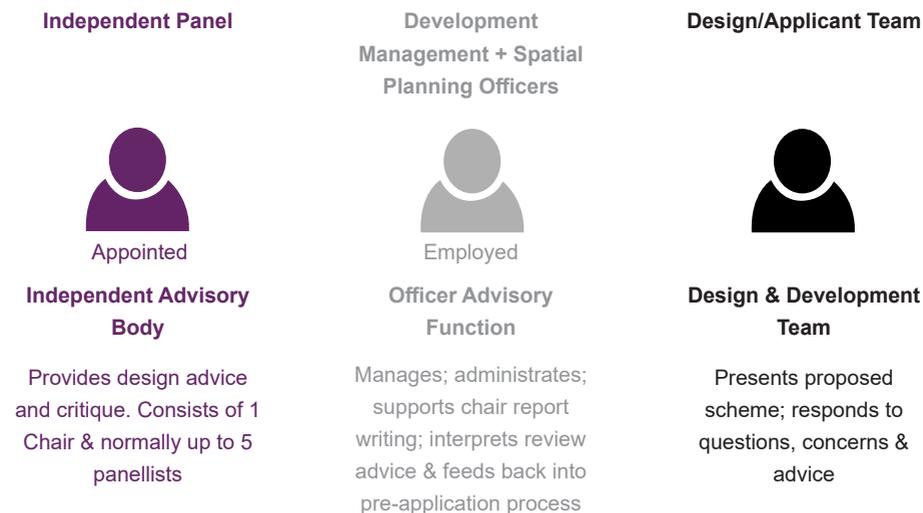
One chair and normally up to five panellists will be selected from the pool of 31 panellists and 4 chairs that are appointed. Panel members for each review session will be selected based on their expertise and skill set required for the projects being reviewed.

A panel will be kept consistent where possible for schemes that undergo subsequent design reviews.

The review panel and applicant team are the only active participants during the review sessions

Planning committee representatives and council officers present will not be active participants during the review session. However the Panel chair may ask them questions or request clarifications if required

The structure and nature of a design review session is illustrated below.



REVIEW DAY OPERATIONS

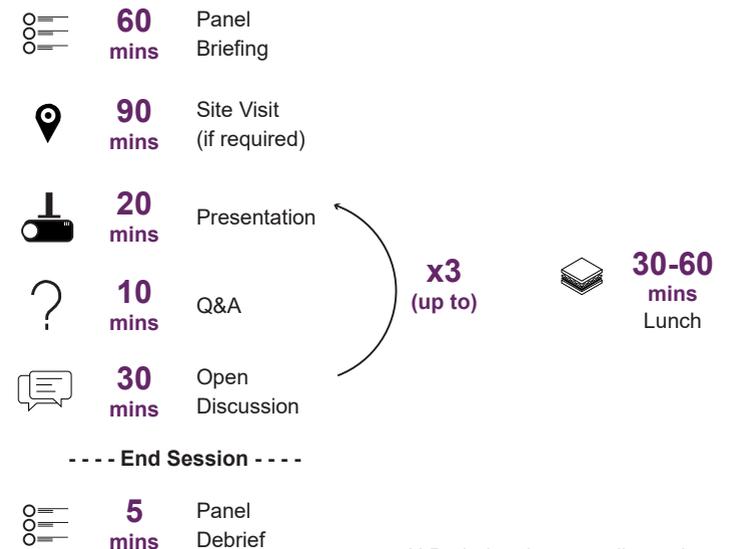
What happens during a Design Review day?

It is envisaged that the panel members will be given approximately three weeks notice before each review day. Where possible, the review day will take place on a regular day every month, and a tentative three month programme will be circulated to all panel members.

A review day panel will be kept consistent where possible for schemes that undergo subsequent design reviews.

The diagram below illustrates a typical Design Review day schedule with approximate times allocated for each section. Up to 3 schemes will be reviewed per full review day - depending on case load, the duration will be half a day or a full day.

Double sessions are also available for larger or more complex schemes. For double sessions, the duration of the Presentation, Q&A and Panel Discussion will be doubled.



N.B. during the open discussion, panel members will be able to ask officers for any questions and clarifications if required

KEY DELIVERABLES

What are panel members responsibilities?

Chair Responsibilities

- Panel chairs are responsible for managing the review sessions. The chair of the review session must mediate complex discussions and debates, and ensure that each panel member is given a fair opportunity to express their comments and recommendations. The chair should ensure that review discussions are constructive and collaborative.
- Panel chairs must provide impartial, professional oral and written advice. The chair of the particular design review session must write the final report with the support of Council officers following the reviews. The chair must then authorise the final report and circulate it to all required parties, including the applicant team 2 - 3 weeks after the review.
- Panel chairs must attend AGMs with Council officers, chair of the Planning Committee (or delegated representative) and other key stakeholders. There may be a requirement for the panel chairs to attend other meetings depending on caseload and potential issues that may arise - this will be communicated if and when required with sufficient notice.
- Panel chairs must also be available to meet regularly and travel to Croydon for occasional meetings and events where required.

Panellist Responsibilities

- Panellists must provide impartial, professional oral advice during the review sessions to assess and critique design in the built environment and place quality.
- Panellists must provide comments and/or edits to the chairs draft report after a design review session.
- Panellists must attend AGMs with Council officers, chair of the Planning Committee (or delegated representative) and other key stakeholders.
- Panellists must also be available to meet regularly and travel to Croydon for occasional meetings and events where required.

Panel members may be requested to provide advice where reasonably required by the Council over and above the scheduled review days, briefing days and AGMs.

In case a panel member is unable to attend their appointed review day, a two week notice must be provided where possible to allow time for a replacement panel member to be booked in.

DESIGN REVIEW OUTCOMES

What happens following a review session?

- The panel chair will write the final report with the support of Council officers and circulate it to all required parties including the applicant team 2 – 3 weeks following the Review session.
- The report will contain a summary of the discussions/comments made during the review session – it will also advise on ways to improve the design and place quality of the proposal.
- The aim of the panel's report is to assist and encourage the potential to achieve high quality design and placemaking. Design Review Panel reports will be published on the Council's Planning Register along with all other application documents once a valid planning application has been submitted and registered for a scheme, unless otherwise agreed in special circumstances. For schemes that do not require planning consent, the Design Review Panel reports will be provided on request once applications for any other relevant consents have been submitted.
- A design review will be highly advisable prior to the first presentation to Planning Committee and act as a gateway to it. Follow up reviews may be required and recommended in several cases.
- Design Reviews will also be available as part of the post submission services offered – depending on the scale and complexity of the scheme, they may be highly advisable during reserved matters and occasionally during discharge of conditions stages, as well as detailed application elements of a large outline planning application during which a further DTS may be required.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Panel advice (verbal or written) is independent, impartial, non-statutory. Applicants of development proposals are strongly advised that the panel feedback is not actioned until officially fed back into the pre-application process by Council officers and that any advice which is actioned before this is fed back into the official pre-application process will be done at the Applicant's own risk.
- Panel Members shall keep confidential all information provided to them as part of their role in the panel and shall not disclose or use that information for their own benefit, nor disclose it to any third party. Any press and media queries should be redirected to LBC officers.

