

PART THREE: DESIGN

GUIDANCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Urban Design Strategy set out in Parts One and Two establishes the broad physical framework for 'the Heart of the City'. The strategy aims to help create a more vital and vibrant city, safer, healthier and more convenient to move about in for citizens and visitors alike. It will be achieved through many diverse decisions about individual buildings, streets and spaces and success will be measured, in part, through the quality and character of the urban fabric that results from these decisions.

Good design is increasingly recognised as an essential part of developing the urban environment. It helps deliver attractive and stimulating towns, it is socially responsible, it can facilitate better management and maintenance and it can enhance values. It involves not just buildings but the public domain as a whole.

Set out here are twenty-one basic principles of urban design which have helped shape the strategy and this section on design guidance. The principles are:

- n to create places for people in the public realm which are attractive and offer enclosure, comfort and safety.
- n to aim for excellence in three dimensional design and the use of high quality materials in the public domain.
- n to relate new designs to their context, enriching the local sense of place and the existing wealth of structures and detail, but also to introduce imagination and innovation where appropriate.
- n to encourage a mix of compatible uses and tenures, particularly at street level, promoting interest and variety, day and evening.
- n to design for a sense of urbanity and visual density in the city, maintaining enclosure and fine grain in the urban structure.
- n to have regard for the wide, formal implications of building design including street corners, building lines, scale and proportion, entrances, the pedestrian's view, the expression of function and the positive use of external space.

- n to protect and create landmarks and gateways, reinforcing legibility and helping navigation, using development and landscape to enrich sequential viewing.

- n to place tall buildings sparingly and only where they would create a worthy edition to a skyline or articulate an area, and consider the impact of new roofscapes on views from elevated vantage points.

- n to protect cherished views from the potential obstruction of new development, to enhance existing views and exploit opportunities for new views and vistas.

- n to regard streets primarily as public places, not roads, and consider the hierarchy, grain and roles of all urban streets in designing the public realm and buildings.

- n to encourage movement and permeability through a choice and variety of linkages, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

- n to protect and enhance existing urban spaces and create well-defined spaces at a human scale and with a sense of purpose such as social meeting or defining a mode of activity.

- n to ensure a variety of streets and spaces suitable for all people and ages and make these environments accessible to the mobility impaired and the elderly.

- n to design a high quality public realm, comfortable, distinctive and robust, with an imaginative and co-ordinated approach to street furniture and signage.

- n to use artists and craftsmen in the public realm in the design of enclosure, floorscape, incident and lighting.

- n to plant trees and create landscaped space where these would have a useful and definite role, can be properly maintained and where good visibility ensures personal security.

- n to plan environments and locate buildings to help reduce the need for use of the private car and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

- n to recycle existing buildings by conversion to new uses, ensure long term flexibility in the design of new buildings and to exploit brownfield sites in preference to greenfields.

- n to promote sustainability through the use of energy in the construction and lifetime operation of buildings, the selection of building materials, water conservation and the avoidance of harmful emissions.
- n to facilitate personal safety and the security of property through planning, design and monitoring but this should not be achieved at the cost of sterilising the public domain, reducing permeability or losing the liveliness which put 'an eye on the street'.
- n to encourage the evening use of streets and spaces through encouraging mixed uses and illuminating the public realms in an exciting and imaginative way.

Achieving the quality and character implied in these twenty-one principles is a difficult task and set out here are a comprehensive set of design guidelines to help secure this aim. These guidelines could be adopted as Strategic Planning Guidance. There are three main areas of guidance:

- n Development briefs
- n Retailed design guidance
- n Safeguarding design quality.

Supplementary Planning Guidance fulfills a number of functions:

- n Provision of detailed guidance on specific sites, or wider parts of a plan area
- n Provision of in depth information which is beyond the scope of Local Plan conventions
- n Additional information or explanatory information relating to local plan policies Additional information on development standards
- n Supplementary Planning Guidance also avoids unnecessary detail in the statutory plan.

Supplementary Planning Guidance may be taken into account as a material consideration when considering planning applications; the weight accorded to the guidance is increased if it has been subject to public consultation.

Supplementary Planning Guidance is intended to assist applicants. Applications seeking planning permission should be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the principles and recommendations contained in the supplementary planning guidance and how the proposed application will contribute to the area.

An integral part of the Foyle Riverside Strategy, published by the LDO in 1997, was a design guide “Establishing Design Principles” which addressed the issues and riverside development, access and the public domain.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

The strategic urban design framework for development within the Heart of the City is established by this document. It is recommended that further, more detailed, site-specific Development Briefs are prepared for the three key development sites at Fort George, Ebrington Barracks and Queen's Quay. Consultants have already undertaken development appraisals and initial design studies for Fort George and Queen's Quay.

Once drafted, it is recommended that the development briefs go through a thorough consultation process with the local community and stakeholders. This could take the form of a 'Planning for Real' exercise for each site. This form of focused participation requires strong objectives, with facilitators brought in to guide a collaborative and intensive process of discussion and design, structured over several days.

The Development Briefs will contain a list of the planning obligations a developer will be expected to meet. Once finalised, briefs should be formally adopted as supplementary planning guidance, after which they form the basis for more meaningful negotiation with interested parties. At present Fort George and Ebrington Barracks are not covered with site-specific policies or guidance in the Derry Area Plan, it is therefore particularly important that there is a thorough process of consultation prior to the briefs being adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

In preparing detailed Development Briefs, it will be important to address the following key topic areas:

3.2.1 Integration with Adjacent Sites

New riverside development requires an understanding of the context within which it is to take place, including an appraisal of local character and should be undertaken in a manner that ensures integration with the wider urban environment. An understanding of context is of critical importance to the creation of high quality places.

The River Foyle and riverside need to be integrated both physically and visually with their surroundings. Direct, attractive, safe and secure connections between the river and areas of activity, key features and attractions will help to create comfortable and accessible places. The aim should



be to create an interconnected network of linkages, with every site being designed in a way that provides a direct connection with the adjacent street and footpath network.

Integration in terms of land use, built form, landscape, open space, height, views and vistas are also important in ensuring that new development contributes to the quality and character of the wider urban area.

3.2.2 Mixed Use

Government guidance supports and encourages mixed use development as a means of regenerating urban areas and promoting sustainable development objectives. The principle of mixed use should generally be promoted taking into account site characteristics and local character/ accessibility. The key issue is to relate to the range of uses and the manner in which they are provided. Live-work and convenience retail could be considered appropriate in any development and may increase in intensity with an increase in scale. Provision within walking distance of residential and commercial development rather than on a site specific basis is suggested as appropriate as this will help to provide activity centres, encourage interaction and economic vitality. The range of uses should also be reviewed to include river-related uses that encourage the use of the River Foyle for leisure and recreation.

A mix of activities should be encouraged for all riverside sites that either depend on a waterfront location or help to draw people to the riverfront. Such uses should be particularly encouraged at ground floor level and on sites near public transport. Appropriate activities include:

- n Water dependent uses eg: boat moorings, river bus stops and water sports centres
- n Waterfront - enhancing uses eg: restaurants, cafes, sports facilities, squares and cultural facilities

The principles of mixed use development should be promoted for riverfront areas, where appropriate. River-related facilities, live-work and small scale convenience retail/services will be considered as appropriate components of any riverfront development. A greater mix of and intensity of uses, however, should be encouraged at specific locations. These include areas with an existing concentration of activity and at new locations well served by public transport. Health, education and community facilities should be taken fully into account in determining the appropriate development mix.

3.2.3 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development requires competing ecological, social, and economic considerations to be appropriately balanced to ensure that meeting the demands of the present does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable forms of development can be promoted through the application of a variety of design standards, materials and practices and the promotion of energy efficient measures. The policy emphasis on sustainable development also highlights the importance of making the best use of land available for development.

More sustainable patterns of development can be promoted in a variety of ways.

- n Focusing development at key locations that are easily accessible

The identification of development and activity hubs will assist in promoting sustainable development objectives. These locations will become foci for development, activities and transport provision.

- n Minimising the use of private vehicles

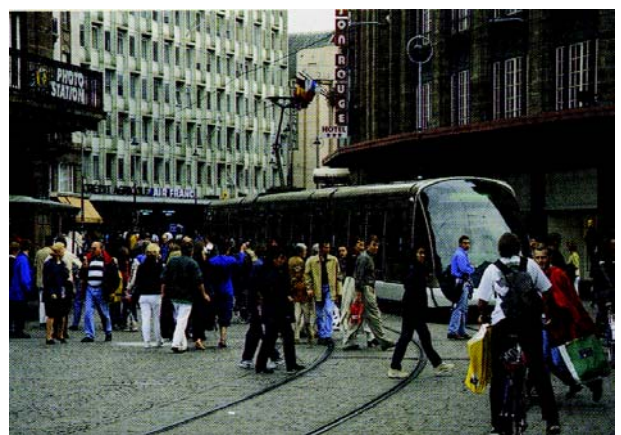
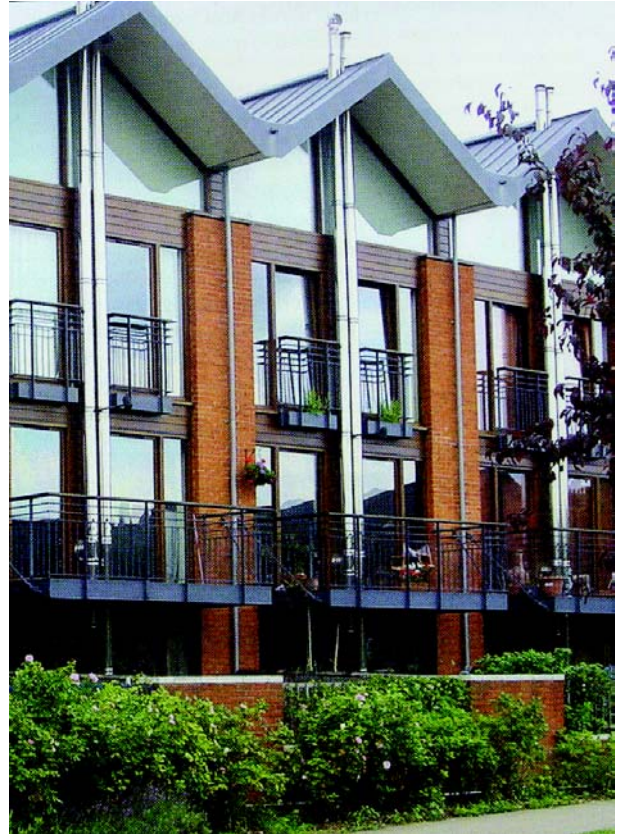
Strategies that promote public transport and walking within the Strategy area will contribute to the achievement of this objective. The concentration of activities into walkable catchments will have a direct effect on the requirement for car use. Sensitive treatment of the public realm to enhance safety, security, vitality and comfort will create an environment where walking may be seen as a favourable and enjoyable alternative.

- n Providing for higher densities in areas that are easily accessible to activity centres

As the focus for the most intense forms of residential development and a wide range of other uses, development and activity hubs will provide a situation where activities and people are brought together in closer proximity.

- n Providing high quality living and working environments that are safe, stimulating, comfortable and appropriate

The provision of a high quality public realm is critical for the creation of conditions that will make walking and cycling viable and attractive propositions.



- n Employing energy efficient practices in the design and layout of buildings and spaces

Energy and resource efficiency has implications for development in terms of sun, water and wind. Passive solar design can have an impact on the cost of heating, cooling or lighting buildings. Rainwater can be collected, stored and recycled in order to reduce dependence on the supply of potable water. In a wider context, the use of building materials that contain low levels of embodied energy or avoid the exploitation of rare or endangered species/habitats (eg rainforest timber) provides for a more efficient use of the earth's resources at a regional or global scale.

- n Implementing the principle of robustness

The principle of robustness refers to building for longevity. In order to promote this principle, it will be necessary to ensure that buildings utilise high quality materials so that they are able to last. In addition, buildings should be designed wherever possible to incorporate a level of adaptability, in order to respond to changing conditions and accommodation requirements over time.

3.2.4 Hierarchy of Routes and Spaces

Successful development depends on good access and connections. Connection to the surrounding street and circulation system is important for even the smallest developments. The quality of public space has much to do with the usability of spaces as pedestrian routes. Routes to the River Foyle and through development sites should be accessible to the public and should be safe and secure. If places are perceived to be safe, they will be used. In this respect, all pedestrian routes should be well lit and overlooked by adjacent development.

Pedestrian comfort is also an important consideration. Pedestrian spaces should provide adequate shelter and sunlight in winter. Design should relate to the environment, ensuring that the negative effects of the environment are avoided and the positive harnessed. Detailing of the public realm can also help to provide connection with cultural or historic associations and provide visual interest and vibrancy.

The riverfront should not be viewed as a linear public space, but as a series of defined focal spaces linked by linear elements. The site by site approach of providing a consistent riverside walk comprising pavement of varying landscape quality and maintenance, interspersed with pocket sized spaces has resulted in a relatively bland and



repetitive approach to this important aspect of the public realm. What is required is a broader view where spaces and activities are co-ordinated to generate a hierarchy or sequence of events along the River Foyle.

The environment plays a key role in the quality of life and policies should emphasise the need to optimise the potential of the existing environment and seek future opportunities which can be created through new development schemes. Issues that should be considered include the opportunities to create new open spaces and pockets of valuable green space where habitats can be improved to increase biodiversity.

A riverside walk of a minimum 6 metres width should be provided in all new development schemes on the riverside and variations in width should be encouraged to create a strong sequence of spaces of varying scales and sizes. The design of the riverside walk should take into account the character of the River Foyle and local area, including direct river access where appropriate.

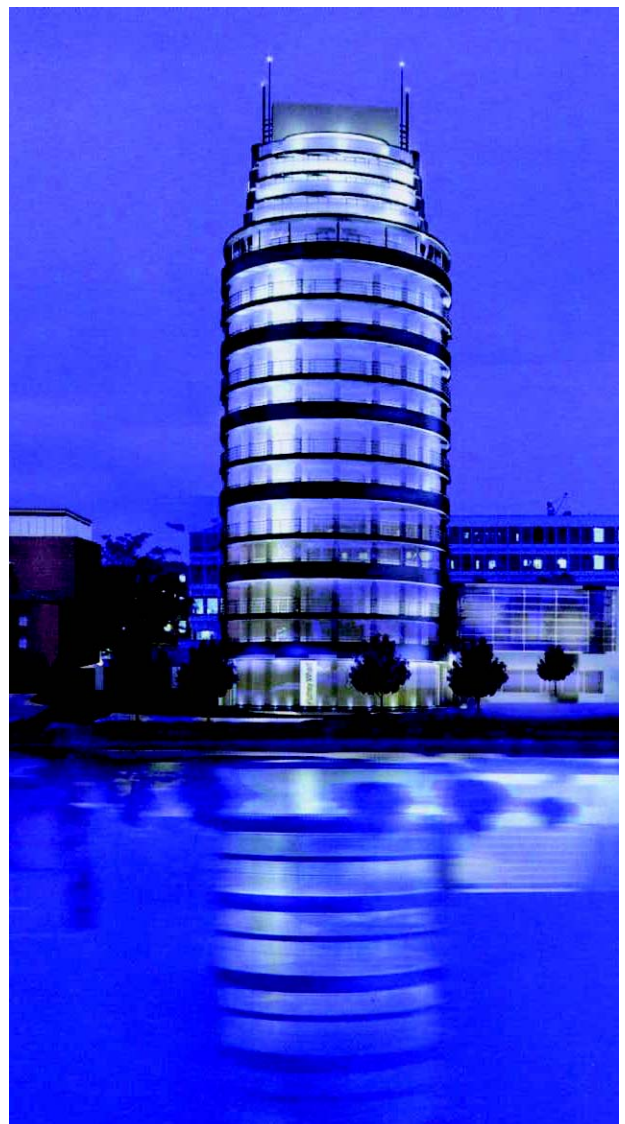
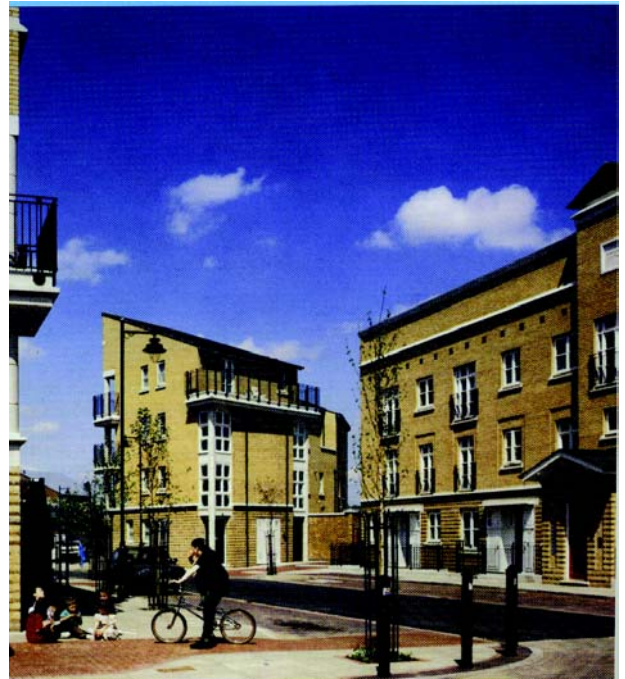
3.2.5 Built Form

Supplementary Planning Guidance should include clear guidance for the layout and form of new development including river use and river access. In this respect, the key issues to be addressed and encouraged include:

- n Development should acknowledge the presence of the riverside and the river itself and express a strong relationship with it;
- n Permeability of edges and spaces;
- n Development of a perimeter block form that respects the alignment of streets and the riverside walk;
- n The creation of active frontages through the orientation of entrances, habitable rooms and public uses to the street and the riverside and the river itself;
- n The incorporation of a suitable semi-public/semi-private transition between the public realm of a street, riverside walk or public space and the private realm of building interiors; and
- n Compatibility with principles of integration and connectivity.

3.2.6 Building Height

Proposals for high buildings are likely to be of strategic importance and as such, it is important that all those involved in the decision making process carry out a balanced assessment of relevant considerations, including:





- n Impact on the city's skyline, built heritage and the character of major urban spaces, including the River Foyle and St Columb's Park
- n Architectural and urban design quality including effects on public realm
- n Mix of uses and provision of equitable access to the building and public realm
- n Ability to capture value for public benefit and influence strategic objectives including opportunities for regeneration, economic and social sustainability and public transport benefits
- n Sustainable construction and building performance
- n Microclimate
- n Transport accessibility and capacity

A key consideration must always be the relationship of high buildings to their contextual environment, their impact on local and strategic views and their relationship to the River Foyle. In this respect it is important that high buildings are able to maintain an active river frontage with the street and riverside. Likewise, issues such as scale and juxtaposition, access to the river, relationship to the opposite bank of the river, and impact on river views need to be carefully considered.

3.2.7 Building Design

Building design and appearance are most often conceived of in terms of architectural style. Architectural style alone, however, should not determine what makes a good building. The study area contains examples of many styles and this adds to the interest of the urban fabric. What is more important is the quality of the building and public realm in totality. Viewed from this perspective, the principal question is whether the building, regardless of its architectural style, makes a positive contribution to the character of the urban area and the public realm.

Building design and appearance is principally concerned with the way that buildings look. It incorporates such ideas as visual interest and appropriateness, richness and diversity, materials, and in terms of interaction, the level of ground floor activity. Design and appearance also have relative importance at a variety of scales - small scale detail is important at ground level for pedestrians, while large scale modulation and articulation provide interest at longer viewing distances.

Buildings should include as many ground floor entrances as possible in order to assist in the creation of an active frontage. Façades can be modulated and articulated with treatments such as bay windows, balconies, canopies and



the use of a variety of materials in order to maximise visual interest. The number, composition and contrast of elements on a building façade, viewed from both near and far, are the key to determining visual quality and interest.

Being a 'good neighbour' is important. New buildings should respect the existing context and respond positively to its key defining features such as set back line, cornice lines, proportioning, block structure and morphology. This does not imply pastiche. New architectural forms can be both supportive and complementary where they are based on these key contextual criteria. There is a place for challenging and innovative designs along the River Foyle taking into account the context within which the development is proposed. Furthermore, a stark contrast between architectural styles and materials can make a place vital, interesting, stimulating and distinctive.

3.3 DETAILED DESIGN GUIDANCE

In addition to site-specific guidance it is recommended that generic guidelines on detailed public realm components, such as floorscape, street furniture, signage and lighting are prepared. These could take the form of a Streetscape Manual and a Lighting Design Guide. A Shopfront Design Guide is also proposed to assist with the revival of the commercial core of the city.

3.3.1 Streetscape Design

It is recommended that a Streetscape Manual is prepared to guide the detailed design and refurbishment of the public realm within the Heart of the City. It should set out policies and practices for co-ordinating the design, choice of materials, management criteria and quality of workmanship for the city centre's streets and public squares. It should bring together the activities of all the different agencies that have a responsibility for a service affecting the appearance of the public realm and bring clarity into the complex processes by which a streetscape both evolves and is maintained.

In developing a Streetscape Manual the aim should be to create a document that both reflects and enhances local identity and also endorses good practice in a useful and meaningful way, promoting a vision for the city centre's streets and open spaces that:

- n Is in character, co-ordinated and rational
- n Is cost-effective and easily maintained
- n Promotes safety and crime reduction





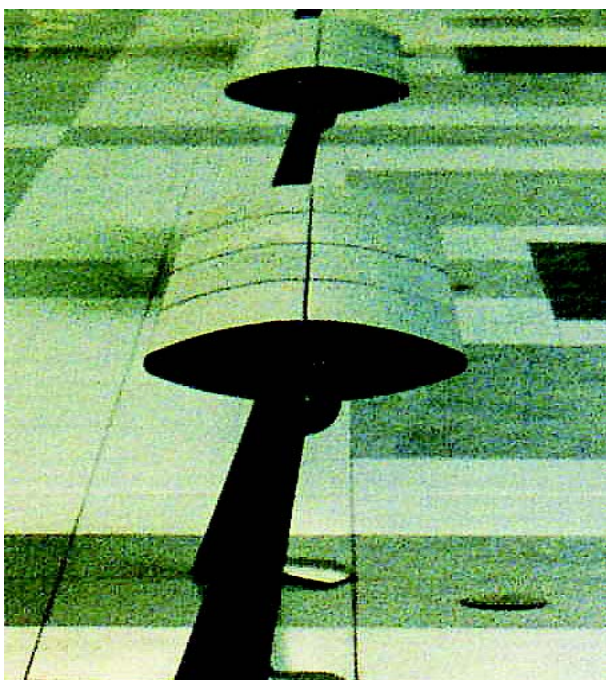
- n Improves accessibility
- n Removes clutter
- n Exemplifies environmental and best practice

Character Areas - The design guidance should respond to the rich diversity and differences in character between parts of the city. Alternative design options need to be developed for historic conservation areas, for example the Walled City and Clarendon Street, and the new waterfronts and key development sites where a contemporary approach is particularly appropriate.



Paving and Surfaces - footways and street surfaces play a major part in establishing the character of an area, so quality in their design and construction is important. We propose that the traditional interlocking rectangular stone or pre-cast concrete flags should be adopted as the standard paving material within the Heart of the City. Where possible, historic paving should be maintained and restored. New paving in conservation, historic and high profile areas should be natural stone, while pre-cast concrete slabs provide a satisfactory alternative in all other areas, if carefully detailed and specified. Granite setts should be used for slow 20 mph streets within the Historic Core Zone and to define the entrances to streets.

Individually selected materials could be used in other special areas such as parks and open spaces. The waterfronts on either side of the river could utilise a combination of materials to help define the different functions of spaces for example, natural stone flags and setts for focal points and bound gravel for links in between.



Street Furniture - the overall approach should be to minimise street furniture clutter wherever possible, by removing superfluous and redundant items and by keeping the introduction of new furniture to a minimum, for instance by putting signs on existing columns. The sense of visual order will be reinforced by careful positioning and by reducing the different colours and styles used to a minimum. Three ranges of furniture are proposed. The renovation and retention, or accurate replication or original furniture in historic and conservation areas; a contemporary range for the waterfronts, new promenades and squares; and a well-designed, understated black range everywhere else.

Trees and Soft Landscape - There is a general lack of street trees within the study area and a major street planting programme could play a crucial role in enhancing the character and quality of many areas and introducing

seasonal colour to urban settings. Trees can be used to enclose spaces, frame views and conceal unattractive elements. However, they take time to establish and grow, and are vulnerable to vandalism. The Streetscape Manual should provide advice on the kinds of street locations that would be suitable for new tree planting, appropriate species and also root containment measures, for instance, specially designed tree pits with root barriers to prevent damage to utility ducts. It should also cover planting in residential areas and the care of existing trees.

In the short term, flower baskets can provide splashes of colour in intensively used streets and squares during the summer months.

Signage - The aim with signage should be to provide effective and clear information to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, with the minimum of visual and physical intrusion. Good quality street signs look attractive and convey their information easily, often with clear symbols and few words.

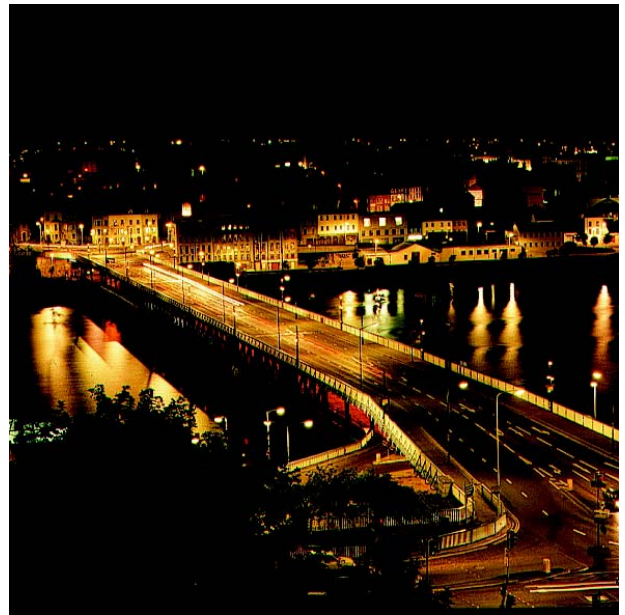
Signage is particularly important for visitors and tourists. The location and type of visitor information need to be carefully considered as part of an overall visitor management strategy which aims to achieve a legible network of routes through the city centre calling at the visitor attractions and heritage sites. In addition to directional signs pointing the way, wall plaques and panels can offer a brief explanation of the historical interest of a building or area.

3.3.2 Lighting Design

In 1992 the then Londonderry Development office commissioned Lighting Design Partnership in association with Ferguson and McIlveen to produce a city-wide lighting vision. The study put forward a number of general concepts relating to the Central Area:

- n All low pressure sodium lamps in street lighting in the Central Area should be replaced
- n Pedestrian scale lighting should be re-introduced wherever possible
- n There should be greater integration of design between Roads Service and Designer's requirements
- n Consideration should be given to commissioning a comprehensive lighting of spires and towers across the city
- n Consideration should be given to commissioning a comprehensive lighting of old shirt factories across the city.

The study identified three Gateways to the Central Area:



Craigavon Bridge at night



Stratford bus terminal

Craigavon Bridge, St Eugene's Cathedral, Queen's Quay. Within each gateway important buildings to be lit were identified and it was recommended that all street lighting sources be replaced with metal halide.

Within the Central Area four zones were defined: Walled City, Clarendon Street, City Centre, Riverside. Within each zone specific recommendations were put forward.

Walled City

- n Extend the use of the Worcester style lanterns to all streets within the Walled City
- n Change all sources in the Walled City, to warm white metal halide, so that no high or low pressure sodium is used
- n Light important buildings of architectural or historic interest ensuring that only white sources are used

Clarendon Street

- n Commission the design of a replacement column and new luminaire for the Clarendon Street conservation area
- n Replace the lamps in the area to metal halide from high pressure sodium to create a warm white effect
- n Light identified important buildings, in particular the "washing" of the terraces from below

City Centre

- n Mix high pressure sodium street lighting with cool mercury amenity lighting
- n Light identified important buildings

Riverside

- n Develop river edge amenity lighting in cool mercury sources
- n Mount edge lights along the river edge
- n Develop a lighting feature or series of features for the centre of the river.

All of these recommendations still hold today, and in addition we propose a number of further measures, in particular relating to waterfronts. One way to approach lighting the city is to break the area down into its key elements of gateways, landmarks, bridges, waterfronts, meeting places, quarters and parks. This approach should form the basis of a new Lighting Design Strategy which builds on the earlier 1992 study and is closely linked to the development of the evening economy of the city centre.

Gateways and Approaches - The following 'gateways' to the Heart of the City have been identified (refer to 2.5.4)

- n Carlisle Square
- n Duke Street and Spencer Road Terrace
- n The Duke Street Roundabout
- n St Eugene's Cathedral
- n Pennyburn Gateway

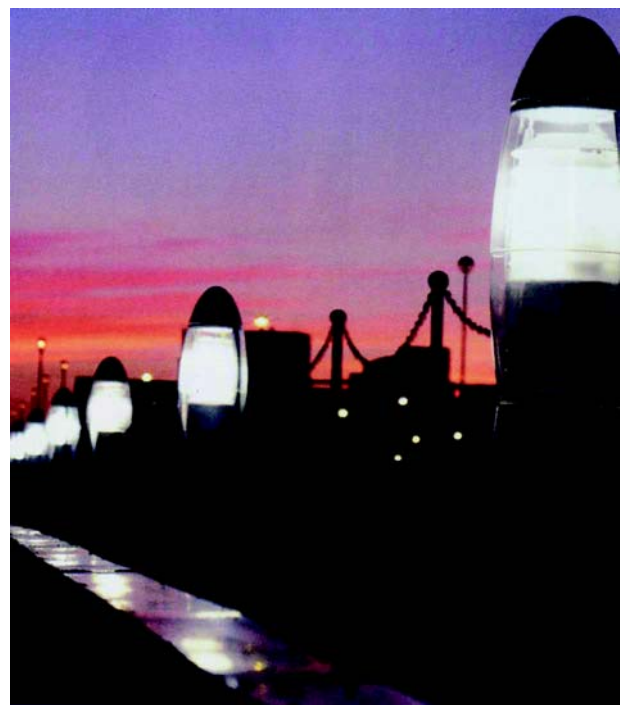
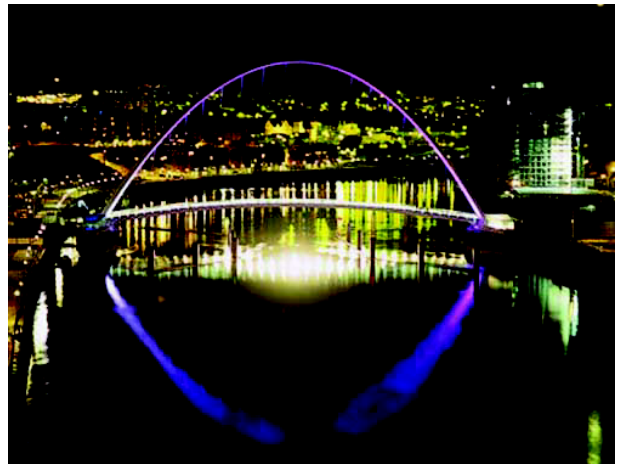
It is recommended that these important arrival points are the focus for comprehensive public realm improvement, including lighting, the installation of public art and signage. The approaches to the gateways in many cases will be planted with avenue trees which could be lit by underlighters. Lighting will be used to highlight important buildings or architectural of historic interest. It will also be used to create a sense of place, and as a unifying element, pulling together what by day could be a number of disparate elements. Buildings under different ownership will be united by the lighting and integrated with the street lighting. Provision should also be made for festive lighting for festivals and events.

Landmarks - The city is characterised by its skyline of spires, towers and former shirt factories. These are the defining elements, together with the city walls, dramatic topography and the river which make the city centre unique. A lighting design for the city should start by sensitively highlighting these landmarks. In lighting spires and towers care must be taken to light the topmost part as brightly as possible in relation to the lower parts, and to take the light down to the ground. New landmarks such as the Foyle Bubble and the Glasshouse in St Colum's will be dramatic sights at night.

Crossing the Foyle - The concept of a 'City of Bridges' is fundamental to the strategy and in the medium to long term a bridge and a cable car are proposed. The lighting of these new structures, together with the existing Craigavon Bridge, will play an important part in defining the image of the city after dark. The new pedestrian bridge at Newcastle has created a dramatic new icon for the city which is even more dramatic at night.

Waterfronts - The strategy identifies over 3 kilometres of new urban waterfront, in particular related to the regeneration of the three key development sites at Fort George, Ebrington Barracks and Queen's Quay.

Along these new waterfronts are envisaged focal points of activity with moored boats, quayside restaurants and cafés. The lighting of the buildings and riverside routes and squares should reflect the pedestrian scale and lighting





integrated with the riverside balustrading, and incorporated into the paving as uplighters.

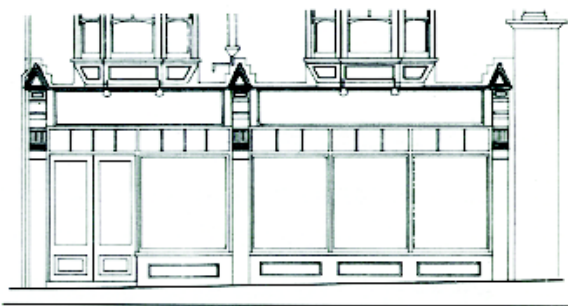
The existing high mast lighting of the Foyle Embankment and Duke Street dual carriageway roads results in a blanket of high pressure sodium light which prevents any selective floodlighting of buildings within the Walled City or the Waterside. The proposals to reduce the width and design speed of these two sections of dual carriageway will also enable their lighting to be re-considered and replaced with light columns in scale to the street and with warm white metal halide. This will also have the advantage of avoiding unnecessary light pollution.

Meeting Places - A network of linked public spaces is proposed with the restoration and enhancement of existing public spaces such as Waterloo Place, and the creation of new contemporary urban squares, for example Harbour Square. These squares and meeting places will be the focus of a developing evening economy which, if successful, will draw people into the city centre creating a relaxed and fun atmosphere. The lighting of meeting places, and the routes between attractions, car parks and public transport plays an essential part in overcoming the perception of crime and threatening behaviour. Lighting also has an essential role to play in increasing the appreciation and enjoyment of a space, enabling full advantage to be taken of opportunities for entertainment, culture and leisure.



Quarters - The strategy places emphasis on recognising the different character and identity of the various quarters that make up the Heart of the City. Lighting should emphasise the local distinctiveness of the different quarters and create a sense of place. Predominantly residential areas such as Bogside, The Fountain, Duncreggan and Upper Waterside require a different approach to mixed use quarters such as The Walled City and Queen's Quay which will be more intensively used after dark, particularly by visitors.

Parks - During the summer months, greater evening use of the two main parks, Brooke Park and St Columb's Park, should be encouraged. Both parks afford spectacular views of the Walled City and the River Foyle. They could also play an important role in developing a vibrant evening economy for the city and providing the setting for summer concerts and events. Sensitive low level lighting of main pedestrian routes and the underlighting of mature trees will help create a safe and welcoming environment that will extend the use and enjoyment of these important resources into the hours of darkness.



The fascia size should be related to the overall size of the building

3.3.3 Shopfront Design

Shopping streets should offer a pleasurable and accessible environment where customers can browse and the goods are displayed in an attractive and imaginative way.

Unfortunately at present many of the shopfronts within the Pedestrian Zone, Spencer Road and other shopping streets do not relate to the overall architectural design of the building. This has resulted in a lack of cohesion and townscape quality. The main exceptions are the restored public houses in Waterloo Street and older shops such as F Mulhern on the corner of Strand Road West and Great James Street and Faller Jewellers on Strand Road East.

Shopfronts are an important element of the street scene and play a key part in our perception of shopping streets because they are at eye level and are accessible to everyone. A shopfront that has been designed with skill and care gives the impression of quality and permanence. In the process, this creates a more pleasant environment which helps attract additional customers and increases sales.

In order to encourage higher standards of design it is recommended that a 'Shopfront Design Guide' is produced, aimed at helping retailers improve the appearance and quality of frontages. Both traditional and modern styles should be promoted with the emphasis on high quality materials. Financial assistance to encourage the repair or renewal shopfronts could also be made available, for example through the Townscape Heritage Initiative within the Walled City Conservation Area.

When installing a new shopfront it should not be seen in isolation, but in the wider context of the building and the street in which it is located. The character and proportion of upper floors and the vertical and horizontal emphasis of the surrounding buildings are important design considerations. If a shop occupies more than one building the vertical division between the buildings should be expressed. Often there are pilasters and capitals between each shopfront which are part of the original architectural design and provide a visual support for the upper storeys.

Where the existing shopfront is of such quality that it contributes significantly to the character of the building or street it should normally be refurbished rather than replaced. Where a shopfront is to be replaced a contemporary design that complements the style of the building is encouraged. If a "traditional style" shopfront is required it should be appropriate to the style and age of the building and the street.

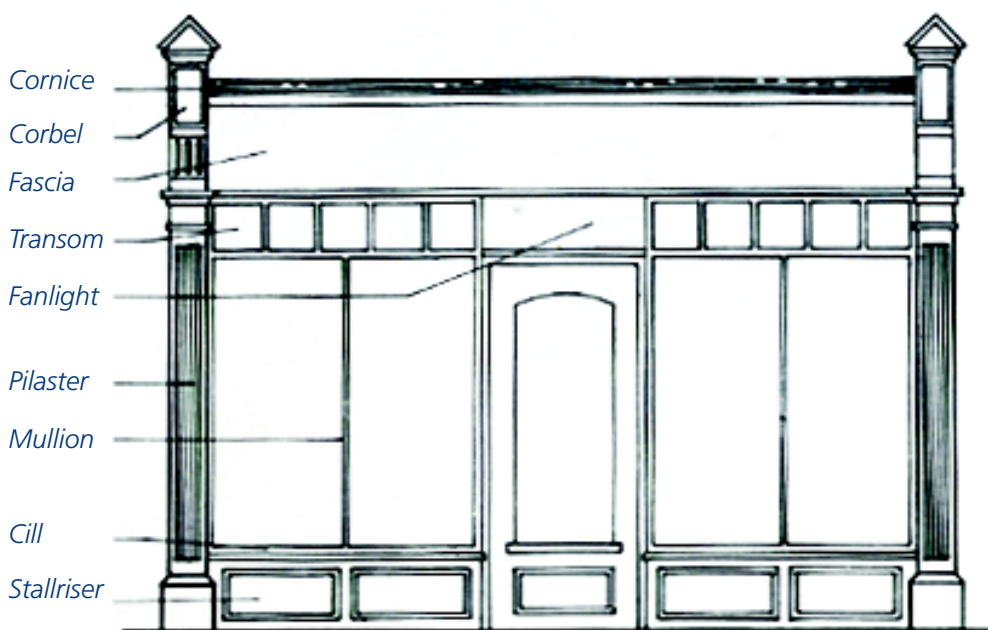


Shutters within the Walled City

Traditional shopfronts such as Faller Jewellers consist of a number of elements (pilasters, cornice, transom, stall riser and fascia). The diagram details a traditional shopfront. All these elements frame the shopfront and integrate it with the building above. The functions and visual effects of these traditional features are in many cases still relevant for modern designs.

There are a number of examples of inappropriate fascia designs and shop signs within the commercial core for example, box fascias that project from the face of the building and destroy the lines of the shopfront, and over large advertisements that detract from the quality of the building. The design and detailing of fascia advertisements and projecting signs should always complement the design of the shopfront and the street. In sensitive locations, such as within the Walled City Conservation Area, corporate styles may need to be modified and reconciled with the need to restore and enhance the overall visual cohesion and identity of the street.

The design and maintenance of security shutters is a particularly important issue. At present they contribute to the feeling of insecurity and lack of activity in the evenings. Ideally they should be replaced with laminated glass or internal shutters, but if external protection is still required they should be of an 'open' design, either a mesh or grille. With design ingenuity these devices can be transformed into works of art. This improves the visual appearance of the street, provides additional illumination and allows window shopping after trading hours. It is important in all cases to ensure that shutters are kept free from graffiti.



3.4 SAFEGUARDING DESIGN QUALITY

3.4.1 Design Competitions

For key sites and public spaces, a competition can provide a basis for securing high quality design, greater identity and character as well as a forum for public interaction prior to the submission of a planning application and assessment of a proposal by the local authority.

The Competition process should be tailored to the specific needs of an individual project. However there are two distinct forms of competition; to find the right architect (or design team), or, to find the most appropriate design solution for a site. The most common and appropriate form of competition envisaged for the major development sites and new public squares should involve finding the right design solution for a site. This will require a detailed brief to be issued to all participants to enable comparative design submissions to be made.

There are many competitive processes that can enable the selection of an appropriate design solution for example:

- n Open Ideas Competition to identify a range of possible design solutions, against a broad conceptual brief, with no immediate commitment to build
- n Open Project Competition to find a single design solution. This is often a two stage competition with a detailed project brief and a commitment to build
- n Invited Competition to find a single design solution, though restricted to a small group of invited participants. There should be a detailed project brief and a commitment to build.

A clear feature of any competition, however, should be the inclusion of a public review process through both the use of open ideas competitions and through display and opportunities for comment in respect of competition entries.

The organisation of architectural competitions in respect of all major riverside sites that are proposed for redevelopment should be encouraged. The opportunity should be provided for the public to comment on submissions as part of the competition process.

3.4.2 Urban Design Advisory Unit

City Vision proposed the establishment of an Architectural/ Urban Design Advisory Unit. The main players identified with this task were the Londonderry Development Office (now North West Development Office), Derry City Council, and the North West Architectural Association. One of the first roles identified for this unit was to produce an architectural design guide for the city, with non-prescriptive design principles and standards.

The realisation of the importance of urban design is now fully reflected in government guidance. The Urban Task Force Report and other recent documents such as 'By Design' and 'The Urban Design Compendium' have all highlighted the need for dedicated urban design officers within planning departments. These officers could form the proposed Urban Design Advisory Unit and would be responsible for:

- n Bringing forward detailed design guidance
- n Working with landowners/developers to formulate development briefs for key sites
- n Running knowledge building exercise for councillors, the public and other staff
- n Facilitating design reviews and assessing projects against best practice
- n Providing design advice for specific applications
- n Helping to bridge the gap between development interests, key stakeholders and the local community
- n Generally acting as development enablers.

3.4.3 Performance Monitoring

City Vision also proposed the convening of an Urban Design Forum every four years to generate ideas for achieving excellence in architecture, the design of public spaces and infrastructure. This would be attended by international architects, landscape architects and urban designers, working together with local architects, artists, design professionals, developers, housing associations, community associations, the North West Architectural Association and the Foyle Civic Trust.

The Forum could play a key role in monitoring the performance of the strategic framework, and other more detailed design guidance, in delivering the highest quality of urban design, and encouraging good contemporary architecture.

The Urban Design Advisory Unit will lead the design review process to safeguard design quality. Design Review Panels should be initiated from the outset for the three key development sites and other major design projects, such as the design of a new bridge, and the creation of the two new public squares at Harbour Square and Duke Street. The panels will comprise multi-disciplinary professionals and community representatives, in addition to elected representatives and statutory consultees. Each stage of the design process and project implementation will be monitored against the Strategic Framework and the design principles and objectives agreed upon in the respective development briefs. As individual projects are implemented, reviews should be carried out by the panel to assess the completed scheme against Best Practice.