



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLACE SHAPING PANEL

Terms of reference 2024

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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Cover image: Cassiobury Park Hub © Knox Bhavan Architects for Watford Borough Council
Building Futures Award 2018



1. INTRODUCTION

Watford Borough Council's Place Shaping Panel has been formed to strengthen the resources available to the council in supporting high quality design for developments in the borough.

The panel will play an important role in securing high quality design. The council is committed to ensuring new development improves Watford townscape and enhances quality of life for all those living in the borough. This accords with the National Planning Policy Framework requirement: 'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes' (Para. 139, NPPF, 2023).

Watford is a busy and historic Hertfordshire town immediately to the north west of Greater London, with a population of more than 96,000 people. It is well connected to central London, with five stations in the borough served by a combination of Underground, Overground and National Rail, and is adjacent to both M1 and M25 junctions.

The town is a growing economic hub home to a number of national and international head offices, Leavesden Studios (home to Harry Potter), and a Premiership football club. It has a UK top ten park - in Cassiobury Park – and is a top twenty UK retail destination.

Its location within the M25 but outside Greater London, means that Watford is experiencing development pressures similar to those encountered in outer London boroughs. These include proposals to increase residential densities with new developments on brownfield sites. With a density of only 8 square miles, Watford is one of the smallest boroughs in the UK and land for development is limited.

The challenge of accommodating development of an urban character in a market town context makes it particularly important that development improves the existing townscape. This should include protecting historic character and delivering on Watford's ambitious sustainability commitments, while improving quality of life for the town's diverse population.

Watford Borough Council has also taken the step of declaring a climate change emergency, with other UK local authorities. This step has been taken to ensure that the urgent steps required to meet the local climate challenge can be taken through all development in the borough. The Place Shaping Panel will play an important role in holding development applications to the high sustainability standards needed to deliver on Watford's proactive climate policies.

The purpose of Watford's Place Shaping Panel is not to duplicate or replace existing mechanisms for securing high quality design, but to provide additional expert advice to inform the planning

process, in line with Section 12 of the NPPF. This states that: 'Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to... design advice and review arrangements... These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments.' (Para. 138, NPPF, 2023).



Watford High Street © Dave Parker



2. PRINCIPLES OF PLACE REVIEW

Independent – it is conducted by people who are unconnected with the scheme’s promoters and decision makers, and it ensures that conflicts of interest do not arise.

Expert – the advice is delivered by suitably trained people who are experienced in design, who know how to criticise constructively and whose standing and expertise is widely acknowledged.

Multidisciplinary – the advice combines the different perspectives of architects, urban designers, town planners, landscape architects, engineers and other specialist experts to provide a complete, rounded assessment.

Accountable – the design review panel and its advice must be clearly seen to work for the benefit of the public. This should be ingrained within the panel’s terms of reference.

Transparent – the panel’s remit, membership, governance processes and funding should always be in the public domain.

Proportionate – it is used on projects whose significance, either at local or national level, warrants the investment needed to provide the service.

Timely – it takes place as early as possible in the design process, because this can avoid a great deal of wasted time. It also costs less to make changes at an early stage.

Advisory – a design review panel does not make decisions, but it offers impartial advice for the people who do.

Objective – it appraises schemes according to reasoned, objective criteria rather than the stylistic tastes of individual panel members.

Accessible – its findings and advice are clearly expressed in terms that design teams, decision makers and clients can all understand and make use of.

Design Review: Principles and Practice
Design Council CABE / Landscape Institute / RTPI / RIBA (2013)



Cassiobury Park © Dom Crossley, Flickr



3. PANEL COMPOSITION

The Place Shaping Panel brings together professional experts from a variety of fields. It is made up of 18 members, including the chair.

Place Shaping Panel members are chosen to provide a broad range of expertise with particular relevance to Watford, including:

- architecture
- urban design / town planning
- landscape architecture / public realm
- heritage / townscape
- sustainability / climate change
- inclusive design
- transport / transport planning

Many of those appointed to the Place Shaping Panel have expertise and experience in more than one of these areas. The composition of each panel meeting is chosen as far as possible to suit the scheme being reviewed, as well as considering gender balance and diversity.

Membership of the Place Shaping Panel is reviewed regularly (at least once a year) to ensure that it provides all the necessary expertise, experience and diversity to undertake its work effectively.

From time to time, it may be of benefit for specialist advice to be provided beyond the Place Shaping Panel membership. In such cases, a professional with the relevant expertise may be invited to attend a review meeting, participating in the discussion with the status of an adviser to the panel.



Lighthouse © Sheppard Robson
2008 British Homes Award, 2008 RICS South East Award





Scroll Church © Theis + Khan Architects

4. PANEL REMIT

The Place Shaping Panel provides independent, objective, expert advice on development proposals across Watford. It provides advice to scheme promoters and the planning authority as a ‘critical friend’ to support delivery of high quality development.

Generally, schemes are referred to the panel by planning officers at an early stage to identify and consider the key assumptions of the proposed design. The independent advice given by the panel is likely to be most effective when given before a scheme becomes too fixed. Early engagement with the Place Shaping Panel should reduce the risk of delay at application stage by ensuring that designs reach an acceptable standard. The planning authority may also request a review once an application is submitted.

The panel’s advice may assist planning officers in negotiating design improvements and may support decision-making by the planning committee, including refusal of planning permission where design quality is not of a sufficiently high standard.

The panel considers significant development proposals in Watford. Significance may fall into the following categories.

Significance related to size or use, for example:

- large buildings or groups of buildings
- infrastructure projects such as bridges or transport hubs
- large public realm proposals
- masterplans, design codes or design guidance

Significance related to site, for example:

- proposals affecting sensitive views
- developments with a major impact on their context
- schemes involving significant public investment

Projects may also be referred to the panel by the planning authority at its discretion, for example where it requires advice on:

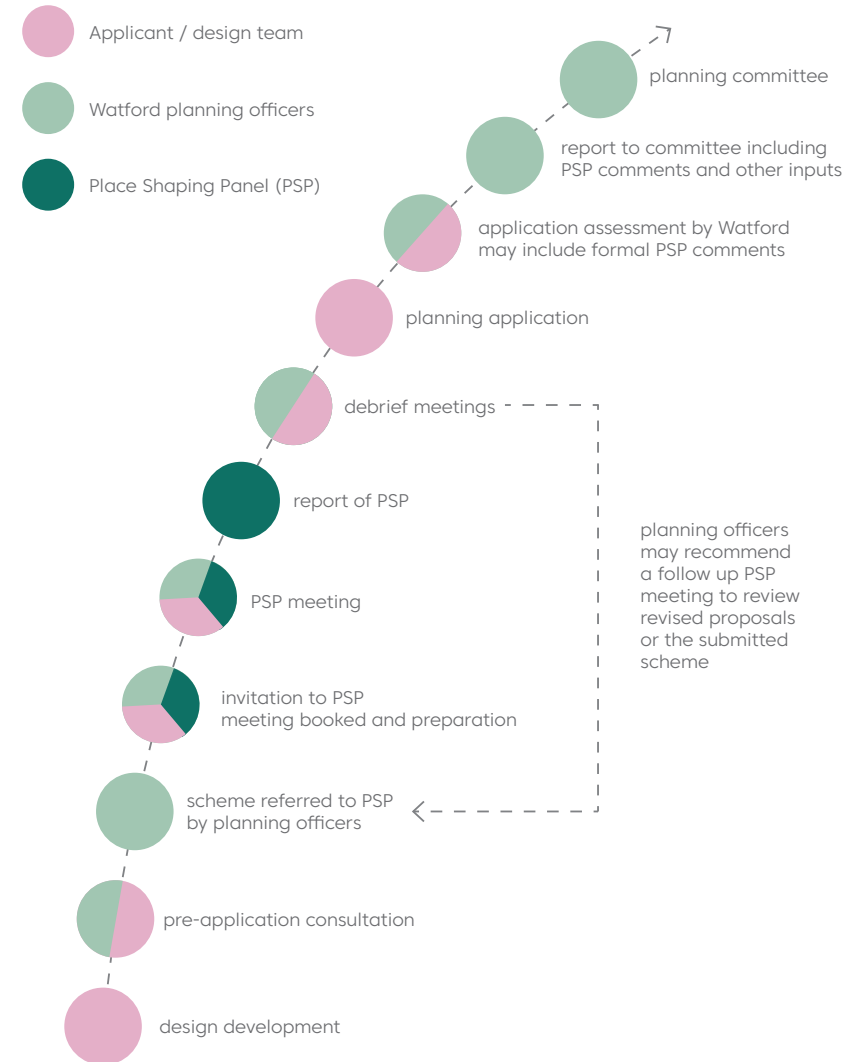
- building typologies, for example single aspect dwellings
- environmental sustainability
- design for climate change adaptation and mitigation
- proposals likely to establish a precedent for future development
- developments out of the ordinary in their context
- schemes with significant impacts on the quality of everyday life
- landscape / public space design

When a proposal is at a pre-application stage, the report is not made public and is only shared with the Council, the applicant and design team, and any other stakeholder bodies that the Council has consulted on the project.

If the proposal is reviewed at an application stage, the report will be a public document and published on the Council’s website. Where the final review of a scheme takes place at a pre-application stage, the report of this meeting may also be made public once an application is submitted.

A diagram showing the role of the Watford Place Shaping Panel in the planning process is shown opposite.

Place review in the planning process





5. ROLE OF THE PLACE SHAPING PANEL

The Place Shaping Panel provides independent and impartial advice on development proposals, at the request of planning officers, and plays an advisory role in the planning process.

Reviews can be arranged for schemes from RIBA Stage 2 (concept design) onwards, providing advice to the applicant and the planning authority.

It is for Watford Borough Council's planning officers and the planning committee to decide what weight to place on the panel's comments, balanced with other planning considerations. Applicants should consult Watford officers following a review to agree how to respond to the panel's advice.

If any points made by the Place Shaping Panel require clarification, it is the responsibility of the applicant and their design team to draw this to the attention of the chair of the panel (if during the meeting) or the panel manager at Frame Projects (if the report requires clarification).



6. INDEPENDENCE CONFIDENCE & PROBITY

Watford's Place Shaping Panel is an independent and impartial service provided to Watford Borough Council by Frame Projects, an external consultancy.

The processes for managing the Place Shaping Panel, appointing members, including the selection of the chair, and the administration of meetings are agreed in partnership with Watford Borough Council.

Panel members shall keep confidential all information acquired in the course of their role on the panel, with the exception of reports that are in the public domain.

Further details are provided in the confidentiality procedure included at Appendix A.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Place Shaping Panel is intended to provide a constructive forum for applicants, their project teams, and Watford planning officers seeking advice and guidance on development proposals.

In order to ensure the Place Shaping Panel's independence and professionalism, it is essential that members avoid any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to schemes considered during the meetings that they attend. Minimising the potential for conflicts of interest will be important to the impartiality of the Place Shaping Panel.

Members are asked to ensure that any possible conflicts of interest are identified at an early stage, and that appropriate action is taken to resolve them.

Meeting agendas provided in advance of reviews will include sufficient project information to allow any potential conflicts of interest to be identified and declared.

In cases where there is a conflict, a member may be asked to step down from a review. In other cases, a declaration of interest may be sufficient. If in doubt, members should contact Frame Projects to discuss this.

Further details on the process for managing conflicts of interest are provided at Appendix B.

8. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

As a public authority, the Watford Borough Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). All requests made to Watford Borough Council for information with regard to the Place Shaping Panel will be handled according to the provisions of the Act. Legal advice may be required on a case by case basis to establish whether any exemptions apply under the Act.



Watford Music Centre, Tim Ronalds Architects © Christian Richters

9. TYPES OF REVIEW

Three types of review are offered:

- a formal review - for schemes with greater impact
- a smaller site review - for schemes with greater impact on smaller sites
- a chair's review - for schemes with more localised impact, or for some previously reviewed schemes

FORMAL REVIEWS

The chair and four panel members attend a formal review.

In addition to planning officers, other relevant stakeholders, for example Historic England, may be invited to attend and asked to give their views after the scheme has been presented.

Formal reviews usually take place at a stage when an applicant and design team have decided their preferred option for development of a site, and have sufficient drawings and models to inform a comprehensive discussion.

In advance of the formal review, panel members attend a 15 minute briefing with planning officers on the policy context, and issues arising from pre-application discussions.

At the start of the formal review, planning officers will summarise their panel briefing. The scheme will then be presented by a member of the design team, normally the lead architect, following a brief introduction by the applicant.

Presentations may be made with drawings and / or pdf or PowerPoint and models, as appropriate.

At least one paper copy of the presentation should be provided, for ease of reference during the panel discussion.

Time allocated for formal reviews will depend on the scale of the project but a typical formal review will last 90 minutes: 10 minutes introductions and briefing by planning officers; 25 minutes presentation; 55 minutes discussion and summing up by the chair.

Large projects, for example schemes with several development plots, may be split into smaller elements, to ensure that each component receives adequate time for discussion.



Cassiobury Park Hub © Knox Bhavan Architects for Watford Borough Council / Building Futures Award 2018



SMALLER SITE REVIEWS

The chair and two panel members attend smaller site reviews.

Smaller site reviews can be arranged for medium sized schemes on smaller sites. This review format is particularly intended projects that require slightly less time and a smaller panel to provide design advice. Examples might include residential schemes of 20 units or fewer in size.

Planning officers will be invited, but other stakeholders will not normally attend. However, the planning case officer may brief the panel on any comments made by other stakeholders.

Smaller site reviews usually take place at a stage when an applicant and design team have decided their preferred development approach, and can provide the drawings and models needed to inform a comprehensive discussion.

In advance of the review, panel members attend a 15 minute briefing with planning officers on the policy context, and issues arising from pre-application discussions.

At the start of the smaller sites review, planning officers will summarise their panel briefing. The scheme will then be presented by a member of the design team, normally the lead architect, following a brief introduction by the applicant.

Presentations may be made with drawings and/or pdf or PowerPoint and models. At least one paper copy of the presentation should be provided, for ease of reference during the panel discussion.

A typical smaller sites review will last 75 minutes: 10 minutes introductions and briefing by planning officers; 20 minutes presentation; 45 minutes discussion and summing up by the chair.

CHAIR'S REVIEWS

The chair and one panel member attend chair's reviews.

In the case of smaller development proposals, or schemes previously presented at a formal review, a chair's review may be arranged to provide advice on the quality of proposals.

Planning officers will be invited, but other stakeholders will not normally attend. However, the planning case officer may brief the panel on any comments made by other stakeholders.

For schemes that are the subject of a current planning application, the presentation should be based on the submitted drawings and documents, either as paper copies or as a pdf or PowerPoint. At least one paper copy of the presentation should be provided, for ease of reference during the panel discussion.

In advance of the review, panel members attend a 15 minute briefing with planning officers on the policy context, and issues arising from pre-application discussions.

At the start of the chair's review, planning officers will summarise their panel briefing. The scheme will then be presented by a member of the design team, normally the lead architect, following a brief introduction by the applicant.

A typical chair's review will last 60 minutes: 10 minutes introductions and briefing by planning officers; 15 minutes presentation; 35 minutes discussion and summing up by the chair.

RETURNING SCHEMES

On occasion, Watford officers may determine that more than one review is required at pre-application stage. For example, a first review may take place at a strategic design stage, with a further review once more detailed designs are available.

Any subsequent reviews will be charged for at the applicable rate (detailed in Section 14).



Clarendon Road Path © Simon Jacobs





Watford Place Shaping Panel Site Visit © Frame Projects

10. SITE VISITS

Wherever possible, a site visit will be arranged for formal and chair's reviews (unless a site visit has already taken place before an earlier review of the scheme). All panel members participating in the review are required to attend. Unless informed otherwise, Frame Projects assumes consent for photographs taken on site or at review meetings to be used on its website and in other publications.

Panel members, representatives of the local planning authority and members of the applicant team should maintain care and awareness of potential hazards for themselves and other attendees during site visits. All those involved should take appropriate action to alert the party of potential risks so that the visit can be paused or terminated if necessary. It is the responsibility of applicant teams to notify Frame Projects in advance of a review meeting if PPE is required on site.

11. MEETING DATES

One Place Shaping Panel meeting is provisionally arranged for each month. These may be used for either formal, smaller site or chair's reviews as appropriate. Exceptionally, additional meetings may be required to accommodate the number of schemes requiring a review and / or to meet key dates for specific schemes.

The following dates are currently set for Place Shaping Panel meetings during 2024:

- 23 January
- 27 February
- 26 March
- 30 April
- 28 May
- 25 June
- 30 July
- 27 August
- 24 September
- 29 October
- 26 November
- 17 December



St Mary's Church, Watford © Dave Parker

12. REVIEW AGENDAS

Agendas will be issued to panel members in advance of each review.

A detailed agenda will be provided that includes notes on the planning context, details of the scheme(s) to be considered, applicant and consultant team.

Information provided by the planning case officer will include relevant planning history and planning policies that officers consider essential for assessing the scheme. Advice may be specifically sought on design quality assessed against these policies.

A scheme description provided by the design team will set out factual information about the project. Selected plans and images of the project will also be provided to help to give a sense of the scope and nature of the project under review.

Where a scheme returns for a second or subsequent review, the report of the previous review will be provided with the agenda.



13. PANEL REPORTS

During the Place Shaping Panel meeting the panel manager will take notes of the discussion - these form the basis of panel reports. Reports will be drafted, agreed with the chair, and issued within 10 working days.

At pre-application stage, reports will provide clear, independent advice on ways in which the quality of development proposals could be improved, referring where appropriate to Watford's planning policies in relation to expectations of high quality design.

The Place Shaping Panel has an advisory role in Watford's planning process, and the project team should consult planning officers following a review to agree how to respond to points raised in the report.

Once planning applications are submitted, the report may provide guidance to Watford's planning committee in determining the planning application. This may include suggesting planning conditions or refusal of planning permission if the design quality is not of an acceptably high standard.

Place Shaping Panel reports may be included in committee reports on planning application schemes – in which case Watford planning officers will place these in the context of other planning matters, which the panel's advice neither replaces nor overrules.

If the proposal is reviewed at an application stage the report will be a public document kept within the proposal's case file and published on Watford Borough Council's website. Where the final review of a scheme takes place at a pre-application stage, the report of this meeting may also be made public once an application is submitted.

At the end of each year, the Place Shaping Panel manager will draft an annual report to evaluate panel process. This will be a brief document describing and reflecting on the panel's activities over the past year - ensuring that, where possible, a full range of panel members is used over the course of the year, and that the panel as a whole remains representative of the diversity of the borough.

As part of this annual review process, a meeting will be held with key Watford Borough Council officers and the panel chair to discuss the report and consider any recommendations for the following year.



The Koda House, BRE Innovation Park, Watford © Kodasema



14. PLACE SHAPING PANEL CHARGES

The charges for Place Shaping Panel meetings are benchmarked against comparable panels providing design review services, such as design review panels in Brighton, Oxford and the London Boroughs of Camden, and Newham, and the London Legacy Development Corporation.

Current charges for Watford Place Shaping Panel meetings are:

- £5,700 + VAT formal review
- £4,130 + VAT small sites review
- £3,125 + VAT chair's review

Applicants are referred to the Place Shaping Panel by Watford Borough Council as an external service and fees are paid by the applicant to Frame Projects for delivering this service. The cost of venue hire, if required, would be in addition to the charges above.

Payment should be made in advance of the review, and the review may be cancelled if payment is not received five days before the meeting. Full details will be provided when an invitation to the Place Shaping Panel is confirmed.

Where a scheduled review is subsequently cancelled or postponed by the applicant, an administrative charge will be applied:

- 50% of full cost : less than two weeks before scheduled review
- £725 + VAT : between two and four weeks before scheduled review



Watford High Street © Dave Parker

15. PLACE SHAPING PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Place Shaping Panel brings together 18 professionals, covering a range of disciplines and expertise. For each review, members will be selected from among the people listed below, according to the requirements of the project being reviewed.



Prof. Peter Bishop (chair)
Town planner
Professor of Urban Design, UCL

Peter Bishop held senior planning roles in London boroughs for 25 years, working on major projects such as the King's Cross railway land developments. He was the first Director of Design for London, and Deputy Chief Executive at the London Development Agency where he worked on the London Olympics legacy plans. In 2011 he was commissioned by the government to review national architecture and design policy, published as the 'Bishop Review'. He lectures extensively, holds a professorial chair at the University of Woxsen and is an advisor to the Mayor of Goyang in Korea.



Irfan Alam
Architect
Associate Director, Kjellander Sjöberg

Irfan Alam is an associate director at Kjellander Sjöberg, specialising in innovative architecture shaped by circular sustainable principles and human-scale, people-focused masterplans. Irfan has extensive experience of complex mixed-use residential developments, bespoke higher education & cultural projects, and urban scale creative masterplans. Key projects include urban regeneration at Neptune Wharf for Peabody / Hill, the Royal College of Art's Creative Campus in Battersea, and a major new city quarter masterplan in Northeast Cambridge for U+I/TOWN.
www.kjellandersjoberg.se



Anna Bardos
Architect and sustainability consultant
Principal Sustainability Consultant, Max Fordham

Anna Bardos is an award-winning architect and certified Passivhaus Designer, specialising in education, arts, community and public buildings. A former director of Tim Ronalds Architects, she is now a principal sustainability consultant at Max Fordham. Anna has particular expertise in the sensitive adaptation of historic buildings, and in devising masterplans to resolve complex development needs. She has led a studio at the University of Sheffield, focused on urban regeneration's response to the climate emergency.
www.maxfordham.com





Thomas Bryans
Architect
Founding director, IF-DO

Founding director of IF_DO, Thomas Bryans' work ranges from small-scale interventions to masterplans, including the delivery of the award winning Sixth Form Centre, St. Teresa's School in Surrey. He has also taught at architectural schools including The London School of Architecture and has written a number of publications with a primary focus on how cities can be designed to help foster meaningful connections.
www.ifdo.co



Marie Burns
Landscape architect
Consultant

Marie Burns is a landscape architect, urban designer, transport planner and author, who co-founded the award-winning practice Burns + Nice. Her skills include: the design and implementation of area-wide masterplans; environmental design associated with sustainability; habitat creation and hydrology; design guides within heritage settings; public realm schemes; and inclusive community consultation. Marie is a panel member of the Haringey, Havering and Somerset West and Taunton Quality Review Panels.



David Hart
Transport consultant
Founding Director, Momentum Transport

Momentum Transport are a leading consultancy which seeks to create transport solutions for today and for the future. With over 20 years' experience, David Hart is a founding director of Momentum, advising on developments including schemes at Victoria and Waterloo and the new Deutsche Bank headquarters. David is also the transport advisor to the Westminster Property Association and a member of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.
www.momentum-transport.com





Rachel Hearn

Architect

Design Principal, London Legacy
Development Corporation

Rachel Hearn is an experienced client and regeneration professional. Currently Design Principal at London Legacy Development Corporation where she leads on major housing, transport, mixed-use and public realm projects across the Olympic Park area at all stages of the development cycle. She has a unique blend of public and private sector experience as an architect, project manager, urban designer and client. Previously she worked as an architect at award winning practices.

www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk



Rachel Hoolahan

Sustainability expert and architect
Associate, Orms

Rachel Hoolahan has extensive experience working with existing buildings, using data and knowledge from a series of deep research assignments to push the boundaries of sustainable development – both in refurbishment and new build projects. As a member of the UKGBC and LETI Circular Economy forums, she translates research into meaningful change on projects. Rachel was awarded the AJ100 Sustainability Champion of the Year award in 2021 for her research on Material Passports.

www.orms.co.uk



Bevan Jones

Sustainability expert
Sustainability risk consultant

With over 15 years' experience in climate resilience in the built environment, Bevan Jones has advised companies across sectors on multiple complex projects to increase climate resilience and manage climate risk. Bevan is also the author of 'Climate Risks for London', a report for the Green Party exploring the impact of climate change in the areas of infrastructure, emergency services, buildings and transport.





Janet Jones
Inclusive design expert
Consultant, AccessAble Consultancy

Janet Jones has over 30 years' experience in design and construction. She has worked on a range of complex projects including public realm audits in Regent Street, Sloane Street, the King's Road, and Angel Islington. Janet has also offered advice and guidance, including access audits and design reviews, to a variety of local authorities, education and transport providers, NHS trusts and major commercial landlords.
www.accessableconsultancy.co.uk



Michael Popper
Engineer
Director, P3r Engineers

Michael Popper is a sustainability expert, and consulting engineer, who established award-winning practices with Michael Popper Associates in 1990 and P3r Engineers in 2012. Michael is experienced in delivering low energy design in a variety of building sectors, ranging from educational and cultural to residential. Michael has also been a visiting tutor at the University of Cambridge Department of Architecture.
www.p3r-engineers.co.uk



Jessica Reynolds
Architect
Founding Director, vPPR Architects

Jessica Reynolds works across a range of sectors including housing, public realm, commercial and cultural projects, specialising in challenging sites, historic contexts and creative collaborations. Her current projects include a new post-covid office space in the Midlands, a refurbished listed building for a mixed-use creative space in Margate, and artist housing in London. Jessica runs a design unit at the Architectural Association on the role of museums in the environmental emergency.
www.vPPR.co.uk





Tahera Rouf
Architect
Associate, RCKa

Tahera Rouf, an architect with over a decade of experience, co-founded the female-led group 'The SaLADS'. As an associate at RCKa, she led the award-winning retirement housing scheme in Harpenden, earning the Inside Housing Development Award. Tahera's passion for cooperative projects in housing, education, and communities is evident in her diverse portfolio. She is delivering a 140 unit later living scheme in West Malling, exemplifying RCKa's commitment to 3-star Fitwel scoring. Tahera also contributes her expertise to the Bromley Design Review Panel. She serves as a trustee for Toynbee Hall, a charity addressing the causes of poverty in London.
www.rcka.co.uk



Nicola Rutt
Architect
Director, Studio MULTI

Nicola Rutt is a director of Studio Multi, a London based architecture practice working on new residential projects and the adaptive re-use of buildings for a range of uses. She has over 20 years' experience delivering projects across the residential, education, arts, community, and workplace sectors, and was previously a partner at Hawkins\ Brown, where she led the award-winning Here East innovation and technology campus in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Nicola also sits on the LB Camden Design Review Panel.
www.studiomulti.com



Rosie Sargen
Landscape architect
Associate, Spacehub

Rosie Sargen is an Associate at Spacehub and Public Practice Alumni, with experience in both private and public sectors. She has led landscape and public realm projects across all scales throughout London and the South Coast, and co-authored Epping Forest District Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy. Her work is focused on improving biodiversity in urban areas through considered urban greening and sustainable planting design. She is also a member of the Urban Design London Environmental Design Panel.
www.spacehubdesign.com





Linda Thiel
Architect
Director, White Arkitekter

Architect and urban designer, Linda Thiel is a partner and founding director of White Arkitekter's London Studio with experience of several housing projects in London and the north of England. With a focus on creating sustainable solutions through new ways of working with materials, energy, retrofit and circular architecture and sustainable urban development, Linda's work embodies a Scandinavian approach to designing homes and neighbourhoods to meet the growing challenge of urbanisation and climate change.
www.whitearkitekter.com



Andrew Thornhill
Landscape architect
Director, Churchman Thornhill Finch

Contributing to projects including the highly sustainable and innovative Enterprise Centre for University of East Anglia and EDGE London Bridge, Andrew Thornhill has won acclaim for his contemporary use of water sensitive urban design; entwining watershed with landscape led masterplans to create better places to live. Other projects Andrew has worked on include Rathbone Market and Manor Road regeneration in Canning Town.
www.churchmanthornhillfinch.co.uk



Alex Wraight
Architect
Partner, Allies and Morrison

Alex Wraight is an architect - he joined Allies and Morrison in 2000, having previously worked in Dublin and Malaysia, and became a Partner in 2015. He has led multiple commercial, residential and education projects, and is responsible for technical design within the practice. He is currently leading a multi-disciplinary team on the design of the Cultural and Education District at Stratford Waterfront, and on the Michael Uren Biomedical Engineering Research Hub, a project for Imperial College London at their White City campus.
www.alliesandmorrison.com



16. KEY REFERENCES

Watford Borough Council

Local Plan

www.watfordlocalplan.co.uk

Character of the area study

www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/225/character-of-area-study-full-version-adopted-december-2011

Residential design guide

www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/227/watford-residential-design-guide-amended-2016

Skyline: Watford's approach to taller buildings

www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/229/skyline-watford-s-approach-to-taller-buildings-supplementary-planning-document

Watford town centre streetscape guide

www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/230/watford-streetscape-guide-2013

Principles of design review

Design Review: Principles and Practice, Design Council

www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Design%2520Review_Principles%2520and%2520Practice_May2019.pdf



Watford Place Shaping Panel Site Visit © Frame Projects

APPENDIX A

Procedure regarding confidentiality

The Watford Place Shaping Panel provides a constructive and reliable forum for applicants and their design teams to seek guidance at an early stage, when the panel's advice can have the most impact. It is therefore essential that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained. The following procedure shall apply.

1. Panel meetings are only to be attended by panel members, Watford officers, and officers from stakeholder organisations involved in the project, for example statutory consultees, as well as the applicant and their design team. If any additional individual is to attend, it should be approved by the Place Shaping Panel manager.
2. At all times panel members shall keep strictly confidential all information acquired during the course of their role on the panel and shall not use that information for their own benefit, nor disclose it to any third party (with the exception of reports that are in the public domain – see points 5 and 6).
3. The panel's advice is provided in the form of a report written by the Place Shaping Panel manager, containing key points arrived at in discussion by the panel. If any applicant, architect or agent approaches a panel member for advice on a scheme subject to review (before, during or after), they should decline to comment and refer the inquiry to the panel manager.
4. Following the meeting, the Place Shaping Panel manager will write a draft report, circulate it to the chair for comments and then make any amendments. The final report will then be distributed to all relevant stakeholders.
5. If the proposal is at a pre-application stage, the report is not made public and is only shared with Watford Borough Council, the applicant and design team, and any other stakeholder bodies that the Council has consulted on the project.
6. If the proposal is reviewed at an application stage, the report will be a public document kept within the proposal's case file and published on Watford Borough Council's website. Where the final review of a scheme takes place at a pre-application stage, the report of this meeting may also be made public once an application is submitted.
7. If a panel member wishes to share any Place Shaping Panel report with a third party, they must seek approval from the Place Shaping Panel manager, who will confirm whether or not the report is public.



APPENDIX B

Procedure regarding conflicts of interest

To ensure the integrity and impartiality of advice given by the Place Shaping Panel potential conflicts of interest will be checked before each review meeting. The following process will apply.

1. All panel members will be required to declare any conflicts of interest.
2. Panel members are notified of the schemes coming before the panel at least a week in advance. It is expected that at this time panel members should declare any possible interest in a project to the Place Shaping Panel manager.
3. The Place Shaping Panel manager, in collaboration with the panel chair and Watford Borough Council staff, will determine if the conflict of interest requires the panel member to step down from the meeting, or if a declaration of interest would be sufficient.
4. In general, a panel member should not attend a review meeting if they have:
 - a financial, commercial or professional interest in a project that will be reviewed, its client and / or its site;
 - a financial, commercial or professional interest in a project, its client and / or a site that is adjacent to the project that will be reviewed or upon which the project being reviewed will have a material impact;
 - a personal relationship with an individual or group involved in the project, or a related project, where that relationship prevents the panel member from being objective.
5. Specific examples include: current work with the client for the project being reviewed; current design work on a neighbouring site; previous involvement in a procurement process to appoint a design team for the project.
6. Personal interests that should be declared, but which would not normally prevent a panel member participating in a review, might include current work with a member of the consultant team for a project that will be reviewed. In this situation, the interest will be noted at the beginning of the review, discussed with the presenting design teams and formally recorded in the review report.
7. If, subsequent to a review of a scheme in which a panel member has participated, they are approached by any applicant, architect or agent to ascertain a potential interest in contributing to the project team for that scheme, they must decline. Professional work in a scheme previously reviewed by a panel member is not permitted, either directly by the panel member or by any organisation that employs them, or that they own.
8. Panel members are not restricted from professionally working on projects within the area. However, if such a scheme comes up for review, that panel member should not be involved and must declare a conflict of interest.
9. Councillors and council employees are not eligible to be members of their own authority's panel.

The table on the following page provides a guide to assessing whether or not a Design Review Panel member has a conflict of interest.



Current commercial situation

If the panel member is currently working...

| | |
|--|---|
| for the client on a different project | ● |
| through a direct appointment to a member of the presenting team | ● |
| with a member of the presenting team, but not appointed by them | ● |
| on the site in a competing bid, or has a business connection to the site | ● |
| on a neighbouring site where the two projects have a bearing on each other | ● |
| in the near vicinity if the projects have a bearing on each other | ● |
| for the local authority on another project | ● |

Past commercial situation

If the panel member has had previous involvement...

| | |
|--|---|
| with the project (same client and brief) | ● |
| with the site (different client and brief) | ● |
| on a neighbouring site where the two projects have a bearing on each other | ● |
| with the client | ● |
| with a consultant on the project | ● |

Future commercial situation

If the panel member is...

| | |
|--|---|
| involved in a procurement process for the client or the site | ● |
|--|---|

Familial situation

If the panel member...

| | |
|---|---|
| has a familial relationship with the client, consultants or site owners | ● |
|---|---|

Informal situation

If the panel member...

| | |
|---|---|
| is a friend of a member of the applicant team | ● |
|---|---|

Formal situation

If the panel member...

| | |
|---|---|
| presents their own scheme to other panel members | ● |
| previously worked for a company that is part of the presenting team, more than one year ago | ● |
| holds an elected position, or is a member of a society, that is impacted by the project – whether paid or unpaid. | ● |
| has a home or business directly affected by a project | ● |

Key

| | |
|--|---|
| Conflict of interest - meaning the panel member must be stood down from the review. | ● |
| Declaration of interest - there is the potential for others to incorrectly perceive that a conflict exists. A declaration should be made at the start of the review meeting, and included in the meeting report. | ● |
| No conflict of interest - either real or perceived, and the panel member is free to take part in the review. | ● |

