What is design quality, and why it matters

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Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
The government’s advisor on architecture, urban design and public space
“The drive for design quality…should be seen as an essential part of improving construction procurement and obtaining better value for investment.”

Tony Blair, Prime Minister, August 2001
What is design quality?
Why does design matter?
How to achieve it
Design is …

… aesthetics?
Ladenkoft?
Ladenkoft?
Ladenkoft?
Design Quality is ...

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Performance
- Sustainability
- Cost in use
- Engineering Systems
- Context
- Aesthetics
- Location
- Visual Form
- Fits in context
- Daylight
- Space Standards
- Flexibility
- Air Quality
- Order
- Functionality
- Innovation
- Comfort
- Safety
- Attention to detail
- Robustness
- Finishes
- Acoustics
Design quality is ...
Design quality is …

- …a well designed school?
10 principles of a well designed school...

1 welcoming and accessible
2 spaces fit for purpose
3 organised circulation
4 good environmental conditions
5 inspiring and uplifting
6 responsive to place
7 good outside/inside space
8 community access
9 sustainable socially & environmentally
10 flexible, adaptable, robust
What is design quality…

- Does it inspire?
- Is it welcoming and accessible?
Design quality is ...

- Does it do what it needs to?
- Is it durable?
- Is it appropriate?
What is design quality?
Why does design quality matter?
How to achieve it
Good design is fundamental to value for money. If we thought that ‘best value’ meant ‘cheap’ and ignored the long-term savings good design can bring, we would be making a false economy.
Why design matters …

Traditionally:

Public Private partnerships:

[Diagram showing the relationship between client, design team, contractor, subcontractors, and service & building management in both traditional and public private partnership models.]
Why design matters …

- Limited contact between design team and client in the bidding process
- Vast amounts of information, central message can get lost
- Private sector instinct is to reduce RISK - design is risk
- “Tell us what you want. If you don’t, we’ll do what we do normally do”
- Fine detail is lost as cost savings need to be found
- What is ‘requirement’ and ‘expectation’, ‘necessary’ and ‘desirable’?
Why design matters …

Best value is not lowest price but the best combination of whole life costs and quality
Initial Capital Costs

Capital Cost: Building
Capital Cost: Furniture
Land
Energy
Furniture Depreciation
Services Maintenance
Cleaning etc.

Recurrent Cost:
Maintenance Depreciation etc
without staff costs

Source: Davis Langdon
Initial Capital Costs

- Land
- Capital Cost: Building
- Capital Cost: Furniture
- Cleaning etc.
- Energy
- Services Maintenance
- Building Maintenance
- Furniture Depreciation
- Staff-related costs

Recurrent Cost: Maintenance Depreciation etc with staff costs

Source: Davis Langdon
It is at the design stage that most can be done to optimise the value of a building.
What is design quality?
Why does design quality matter?
How to achieve it
How to achieve it …

- Understand yourself
10 ways to be a successful client

1. Provide strong client leadership
2. Give enough time at the right time
3. Learn from your own and others successful projects
4. Be clear about your aims, and express them well in your brief
5. Understand the financial commitments from the outset
6. Work in a collaborative spirit
7. Find the right people for the job
8. Respond and contribute to the context
9. Commit to sustainability
10. Sign off at all key stages
• Leadership
• Preparation
• Visit built schools
• Knowing what you want
• Clear and concise brief

Thank you.

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