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**St Albans Design Review Panel****St Albans | Design South East****Recruitment Pack, October 2019**

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**About St Albans**

The City and District of St Albans has a very special character, with a blend of City, towns, villages and Green Belt countryside. The historic cathedral City of St Albans is Hertfordshire's oldest town with strong Roman and medieval heritage. The residential commuter town of Harpenden has an impressive range of historic buildings and open spaces. The District is prosperous and popular due to the high-quality environment, excellent schools and transport links to London and the rest of the country.

Throughout the District, development pressure is intense. The Draft St Albans City and District Local Plan sets out a significant housing, infrastructure and employment delivery programme for the period 2020 – 2036. It includes an additional 14,608 dwellings to be delivered during the Local Plan period at an overall average rate of 913 dwellings per annum. The majority of new dwellings are planned in strategic-scale developments termed 'Broad Locations', and masterplans for these locations are currently in development. In addition to new dwellings the Council expects the delivery of accompanying green and social infrastructure, including several primary and secondary schools, as well as major sustainable transport infrastructure improvements.

The Council has secured Garden Town status for the cross-boundary Hemel Garden Communities of approximately 11,000 dwellings adjacent to Hemel Hempstead. Approximately half of the new homes and most of the new employment land will be located within the St Albans City and District Council boundaries.

In addition to the strategic-scale projects a number of developments are anticipated in the historical centre of St Albans that will require sensitive and high-quality design solutions to integrate with the existing fabric.

The Council has a very ambitious design agenda and is actively working on introducing a step-change in the quality of developments that come forward in the district.

**About Design South East**

DSE is a non-profit organisation that helps create great buildings, spaces and places. We are the fastest-growing design advisory organisation in the country.

We support the policy, planning and design process by providing clear, independent and constructive advice that combines local knowledge with informed, insightful expertise, in a flexible and agile way that provides value for money.

Our design review services operate throughout London, the South East and the East of England. We work regularly with more than 30 local authorities and run local design review panels in ten local authority areas including Kingston, Sutton, Guildford, Ashford and Brentwood. We provide informal design advice to local authorities and deliver training for officers and elected members through Kent Design, which is a model shared CPD programme for the public and private sectors.

## **The St Albans Design Review Panel**

The St Albans Design Review Panel is being established to expand upon and complement the existing design management arrangements within St Albans.

The Council has been developing strategies to raise the bar of developments within the District. In addition to setting up the St Albans Design Review Panel the Council is working with Proctor & Matthews Architects and David Lock Associates to develop a draft Strategic Sites Design Guidance. It is due to be completed in draft by autumn 2019 and ultimately adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Council has also developed the Draft Strategic Sites Masterplanning Toolkit to set out the its aspirations for strategic-scale developments. The Toolkit establishes a design-led approach to the pre-application process that is supported by regular Design Reviews.

The draft Local Plan Policy L23 recommends a Design Review for major projects:

For the development of 50 or more dwellings or 1,000 sq. m of non-residential floorspace, proposals should be subject to pre-application expert design review, with appropriate community involvement. An independent design review (to be funded by the developer) may also be sought.

Design Review may be required as part of the Masterplanning process for Broad Locations.

Design South East has been contracted to set up and manage a dedicated design review panel for St Albans, providing a pool of independent design expertise across a range of key design areas. We are aiming for an open and collaborative approach to design review panel sessions, focussing on co-design between Panel members and design teams.

The Panel, which will have approximately 20 members. We will be looking for some panel members with a connection to St Albans as well as some members who will bring a fresh perspective. If you have a personal connection to or investment in St Albans, please let us know in your application.

We are particularly interested in hearing from you if you have experience in the following areas;

- Masterplanning/urban design
- Viability, to enable challenges to the volume housebuilder approach
- Heritage and conservation
- High street regeneration
- Infrastructure

Panel meetings will be convened to undertake a collaborative design review of a project in collaboration with the design team

### **Key dates**

Monday 30th September	Recruitment launch
Monday 28th October (12.00 noon)	Application deadline
Wednesday 6th November	Panel members announced*
Tuesday 12th November	Panel chair interviews
Monday 18th November	Panel induction day

\*If you do not hear from us by the end of the day on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November, your application has not been successful. Unfortunately, given the number of applications anticipated, we will be unable to provide individual feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

### **How does the Design Review Panel work?**

Your main role will be to take part in Design Review Panel meetings. You should expect to take part in a panel every three or four months. We will schedule monthly Design Review Panel meetings for six months at a time. We will ask you what days you are available and send you back a list of panel dates which we ask you to keep free. If in any month there are no schemes to review, we will contact you a week or two before the date to let you know. We may also contact you regarding additional Panel dates which we have to schedule at short notice.

As soon as we know what schemes are going to be considered at a Panel meeting, we will let you know so that you can inform us if you have any potential conflicts of interest.

A few days before a Panel meeting, we will send you a link to drawings and other documents. You should review these before the meeting and consider what questions you may have about the scheme and what issues you may want to raise.

A typical design review of one scheme takes half a day and will include a site visit, a briefing from the local authority, a presentation from the scheme promoter and time for discussion and feedback. Some larger schemes take more than half a day and sometimes we get to review more than one scheme in a day. Sometimes we undertake follow-up reviews where a smaller panel can meet with the promoters and local authority for around two hours.

After the Panel meeting the DSE staff member who was present will draft a report. This will be circulated to you to check that it is accurate and comprehensive. The report sets out the Panel's expert opinion and advice.

### **The recruitment process**

#### **Selection criteria**

Successful applicants will demonstrate the following essential criteria:

- A commitment to improving the quality of buildings, streets and places.
- An understanding of the environmental, development, planning and economic context of England.
- A qualification in one of the built environment professions and experience in practice. (Membership of professional bodies would be desirable)
- An understanding and appreciation of the roles played by other professions and players in the built environment, including councillors and community leaders.
- A proven track record in influencing better buildings and spaces and/or advocating for good design.
- Understanding of the design, development and planning process.
- An ability to critically appraise development proposals in a positive and constructive manner.
- An ability to communicate complex design observations to a range of audiences, both lay and professional.

- We will be looking for some panel members a connection to St Albans as well as some members who will bring a fresh perspective.

### **Selection**

Recruitment of the Panel will be carried out through an open, objective process. Applications will be assessed jointly by officers from the St Albans City & District Council and Design South East. The Panel induction will take place on **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November** and all panel members will be expected to attend. Please confirm your availability on the application form.

### **Terms and conditions**

#### **Remuneration**

We will pay Panel members an honorarium for attending design reviews. The rates are as follows:

Half-day reviews      £300

Full-day reviews      £400

Follow-up reviews    £200

Reasonable travel expenses will also be paid.

#### **Term**

Two years - may be extended for a further 3 years.

#### **Time commitment**

We ask Panel members to commit a minimum of 4 days per year

#### **Relationship to your company/organisation**

While we are very grateful that employers release their staff to attend Design Review Panel meetings, it is important to note that Panel members are appointed as individuals rather than representatives of their company, organisation or other interests.

### **How to apply**

1. Complete the online application form by following this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/StAlbansPanel>

There are two questions requiring longer answers: one that asks you for up to 150 words about your professional experience and another that asks for a statement of up to 200 words about why you want to join the panel and the contribution you think you can make. You may find it helpful to prepare these answers in advance and paste them into the form.

2. Email your CV\* (no more than 4 pages) to [david@designsoutheast.org](mailto:david@designsoutheast.org)

\*Please do not send any other information such as portfolios or testimonials.

Design South East is committed to achieving gender balance and greater diversity on all of its panels. We encourage applications from women, members of ethnic minorities and members of other groups currently under-represented on design review panels.

### **Deadline**

The deadline for applications is 12.00 noon on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October. We expect to make decisions by Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November.

If, *having thoroughly read this pack*, you have further questions, please contact David Tittle, [david@designsoutheast.org](mailto:david@designsoutheast.org) or call 01634 401166 and request a call back.