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## SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

### Introduction

Edward Cullinan Architects have a long-standing commitment to design sustainable masterplans and buildings. We understand that the importance of sustainability is not limited to 'environmentally friendly' buildings, but also that it embodies political, social and economic strategies.

Addressing specifically the environmental agenda will result in little progress; only by resolving political, social and economic issues through an integrated approach can the environmental challenges really be tackled. This is not to suggest that, as architects, we can tackle world problems single-handed, but accepting that in practising our profession, we have a greater responsibility than most for promoting the sustainable use of the world's natural resources.

The sustainability debate is broad and covers all professions at different levels and extent. It will, however, be beneficial for everyone involved in the design projects to understand each other's responsibilities, such as the client, statutory authorities, and other consultants and stakeholders.

We have a very wide experience of sustainable design and it is our policy continually to refine these strategies and to develop new ones.

### Political

A stable political understanding is essential to any real attempt of a successful strategy by governments to tackle issues of sustainability. These issues are not exclusive to the environmental agenda such as the Kyoto treaty which addresses carbon dioxide emissions. It must also cover areas such as: Third World debt, child poverty, disease and famine, human rights, human trafficking, etc. The UK government is currently proactive in these fields and must continue to be encouraged and supported by our profession.

### Social

A socially responsible and understanding by the local community towards a sustainable environment is an important step, but without addressing more fundamental problems such as crime, education or employment, it is difficult to imagine a cleaner local environment. Why would a community recycle if its members are likely to be mugged on the way home from the bottle bank?

### Economical

For developments to happen, they must be economically viable, attractive to the clients, and provide a return on investment, although the financial return need not be direct.

How do we price a building? Costs such as construction cost, material cost, environmental cost, life-time cost, maintenance cost and operational cost should be assessed together with the 'value' of the building.

How do we value a building? Consider the economic benefits, job creation, improved environment, better living conditions, better health and welfare, and design excellence.

### Environmental

We have a long-standing ambition to design to minimise the energy that our buildings need, and to reduce the negative impact of our buildings on the planet.

Techniques vary widely, from using recycled or reclaimed building materials, to locally sourced low embodied materials; from energy saving heating and lighting appliances to natural ventilation and daylight, to energy production incorporated into the building fabric such as photovoltaic and wind turbines; from water saving sanitaryware to rainwater collection (sustainable urban drainage system/SUDS), to grey water usage in landscape irrigation and toilets; from non-toxic finishes to reusable materials, to demountable structures; from flexible interior spaces to refurbishment of existing buildings; from well ventilated building enclosures to minimum heat loss; from highly insulated building envelopes to thermal mass of the structure.

There are many environmental methods and techniques being promoted within the building industry; most are genuine, some are misleading, others are outright wrong. We shall endeavour to research and advise our clients on the pros and cons of all available options.

**Approach**

We understand that not all buildings can incorporate every 'green' measure available, but we wish to enter a dialogue with our clients and put forward aims for sustainable development:

- Where possible, assist the client in the choice of the site to ensure the most sustainable development.
- Work with the masterplanners to consider the site and its landscape context carefully, so as to make best use of them and ensure that any new development will create an enhanced micro-climate and ecology.
- Engage the building users in the design process. It may be obvious, but getting the brief right and developing a design which meets it reduces waste.
- The health and well-being of the occupants is still the foundation of designing buildings.
- Understand the whole-life costs of the buildings and how the design can minimise these.
- Guide our client through the maze of different and sometimes conflicting construction techniques and building materials.
- Design the form of the building to make maximum use of the sun as a source of energy and daylight.
- Consider the local sourcing of materials and labour.
- Consider the embodied energy of the materials to be used.
- Consider using by-products which would otherwise find themselves in land-fill sites.
- Design the building so as to reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> – non-renewable energy consumption - generated in its construction and operation. This can be by the use of natural ventilation, thermal mass to store heat and 'coolth', solar shading to minimise the need for mechanical cooling.
- Work with the masterplanners to develop the potential of the site for efficient use of water, including control of run-off.

**Conclusion**

Sustainability is not about *'this way is better than that way'*, it is about understanding the conflicting and inter-related issues in order for us as a team to make more informed judgement and be able to give a coherent and intelligible reasoning to design decisions.

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