



Green Man Estate

The Glass-House Community Led Design

The Glass-House Community Led Design is a national charity that encourages and supports tenant, resident and community participation and leadership in physical regeneration projects throughout the UK. The Glass-House works at ground level with community groups and the design and regeneration professionals with whom they work to promote constructive and informed collaboration founded on mutual respect. Our programmes and services are aimed at empowering tenant, resident and community groups, giving them the skills and confidence to be effective stakeholders, contributors, partners, and indeed project leaders. It is our firm belief that local people are the key to successful regeneration, and that their active participation in informing and leading projects results in more sustainable neighbourhoods and more empowered communities.

Each project we support is assessed individually to ensure that we meet the specific needs of the group. Our range of support to groups includes: access to independent specialist advice; inspiring study visits; access to case studies and visits to successful community projects; help with getting local people involved in the design process; training and support around the principles of design; brief development; and working effectively with design and regeneration professionals.

The Glass-House also plays a vital role in promoting the value of community led design and informing policy and good practice among regeneration professionals and agencies. This work is grounded in the firm belief that design and regeneration professionals who have a better understanding of the value of community participation and examples of effective collaborative working are better able to respond to local needs and aspirations and to produce high quality regeneration schemes that bring positive and sustainable change to an area.

Design Training for Green Man Lane Estate Residents' Design Steering Group

Advice and design training was provided to the Green Man Estate residents' 'Design Steering Group' over the period from 21 January 2009 to 12 March 2009.

The context: The Green Man Estate is owned and managed by Ealing Council, was developed in the 1970's, and built with pre cast concrete construction. The Council had identified the estate for demolition and renewal and had shortlisted two consortia of developers to prepare stage 1 proposals.

The residents had formed a Design Steering Group that had been recognised by the Council as an interest group that had become an active participant in the developer selection process. As part of that process there had been meetings with the two consortia and the residents Design Steering Group had commented on and questioned the developers' proposals. Each competitor had then prepared further proposals that were being presented to enable a final choice of development partner to be made by the Council.

The residents within the Design Steering Group wished to develop their skills:

- to have knowledge of the key issues for any regeneration proposals so that they could prepare questions to ask the two shortlisted teams in the Q&A sessions.
- to review the design process to establish the key issues for estate regeneration so that they were able to confidently analyse the proposals and take part in the dialogue with the competitors.

There were 4 meetings with the residents:



Initial briefing on 21 January 2009

A site visit by the Facilitator to walk around the estate and meet two residents, members of the Design Steering Group (DSG), who provided a briefing on the project so far, and explained the next key steps that the Design Steering Group would be involved in.

There was a discussion about the impact of the regeneration proposals on residents and the wider neighbourhood so that the DSG could question the consortia and then assess the extent to which the consortia had taken the residents into consideration, and had considered the long term regeneration of the estate and its integration into the wider neighbourhood. The meeting then planned the following sessions of design training for the DSG as two sessions, inside the home, and outside the home.



First DSG training session on 23 January 2009

The meeting had been called by the DSG who had notified their members. Approximately 10 people attended in the estate community together with a representative from The Glass-House. There were two parts to the workshop.

The first session was a briefing for the DSG on the design standards for publicly funded housing, and a handout was circulated (included on the CD) including contacts for the relevant web sites. Of particular concern to residents was the proposed space standards when compared with their current homes. The residents felt that the size of their current homes should be the minimum standard for the new homes. By bringing together information that the DSG held it was possible to confirm the size of their current homes and compare this with the proposed space standards, which were a standard known as 'Parker Morris +10%' as promised and were generally similar to the size of the current homes.

The second part of the workshop was designed to encourage residents to think about the usefulness of the different spaces in their homes, something many of us simply take for granted. It was structured as a journey through the home from the front door onwards:
what were the priorities for each of the spaces in the home?

- what made a space useful? Or difficult to use?
- what enabled them to add their identity onto the place that they lived so that the new development was truly their home?

(The mark up sheet that was the outcome is included on the CD.)



The second workshop on 26 February 2009

This was held in a residents flat, and focussed on the key issues for any regeneration proposal:

- identity within the neighbourhood v. integration within the neighbourhood
- clear and safe routes
- secure by design
- social fabric and social infrastructure
- places and spaces that bring enjoyment and encourage people to meet
- a range of services that provide the infrastructure for a sustainable community should these be exclusive to the regenerated estate or provide a catalyst for wider regeneration
- could projects such as community space be the basis for a social enterprise project?

The session closed with a discussion assisting the DSG to form further questions for use in the next stage in the selection of the developer.

The third workshop on the 12 March 2009

Again in the estate community hall, about 'Outside the Home'.

The first session was a slide show to encourage debate about the quality and design of external spaces. Intended to provoke responses from the residents: like, dislike, query, relevant, not relevant, etc.

The slide show is included on the CD

The second part of the workshop was structured around a journey where a friend was coming to visit you, got off the bus, and had to find their way to your flat:

- was there a clear identity for your flat and a clear route to find it?
- did the route feel safe?
- clear definition of public and private space?
- not dominated by cars?
- enjoyable spaces to form the way?
- places and spaces that encourage people to meet their neighbours?
- good quality materials?

The debate and the priorities of the DSG are recorded on the worksheet and included on the CD. Overall the concerns of residents were about reconnecting their estate to the wider neighbourhood, Should facilities be shared? How could any proposals for new community facilities help increase the sense of identity and ownership of the regeneration project? How could they best ensure that the competitors' proposals were the beginning of the debate and not the end of the issue?

In conclusion

The residents approached The Glass-House, who provided the workshops, because they felt that they would benefit from independent design training and advice on how to interrogate the competition entries. Though some DSG members were more confident than others, residents were able to ask excellent questions and raise their concerns through targeted discussion within the workshops. The workshops provided some basic information and skills development, allowed the group to express and share their concerns, and gave residents the confidence to prepare their questions and participate in the selection of the developer.

Photographs courtesy of The Glass-House