

The high-contrast combination of black letters on a yellow background is legible at three times the distance as a low contrast combination of green and red. Some partially sighted people, however, find that white or pale colours on a dark background give a high degree of legibility.

If the public has been involved with the project throughout the earlier design stages, a strong consensus may have developed giving legitimacy and a strong political authority to the proposals. Complete consensus is unlikely and there will be those individuals and groups whose interest is threatened. At this stage they will, no doubt, be advised to lobby political representatives in the hope of having the project rejected or, at least, having it amended favourably. Such groups, depending on the type and scale of the project, may then formally object at a planning appeal, hearing or inquiry. Since it is possible that groups of objectors may employ professional advisors it is wise for those preparing an urban design project to

have considered the main alternatives to the proposal and to have at their disposal pertinent arguments for the rejection of any alternative. A failure to defeat such arguments could lead to the loss of the project or the development of an unsatisfactory compromise.

Assuming a successful outcome to the public consultation process, then further drawings are necessary to instruct legal advisors on land conveyancing for land assembly or subdivision and to instruct contractors to carry out the work. These specialist production drawings for project implementation will usually be prepared by architects, landscape architects, engineers and land surveyors and not necessarily by the urban designer. While the urban designer may not be directly involved with the preparation of working drawings for buildings, roads or planting, he or she should know when they are required, what form they take and be able to read and understand their content. The content of such drawings has to be related to the general proposal in order to determine points of conflict.

Most designers are called upon, from time to time, to make a presentation to members of the general public, colleagues or the client. Such presentations are often used to sell the idea of the project and to seek support for the project. Presentations may also be used to elicit information from the public and to seek ideas. The presentation should be organized with a view to its purpose and the audience to whom it is directed. A series of public meetings, such as those described in the Newark study in Chapter 5, are quite different from a presentation to a large formal gathering or even to a small intimate group of colleagues. Common to all such presentations is a sound preparation, a thorough knowledge of the subject matter and an enthusiasm for the project. If the speaker does not believe in the project and its vision then clearly neither will the audience. Some hints at presentation are listed in Figure 7.19.¹⁴

Figure 7.19 Good practice in the presentation of projects.

- 1 Consider the audience and its needs.
- 2 Assemble the facts in the light of (1) above, taking into account the complexity of the material.
- 3 Develop sufficient and suitable visual aids.
- 4 Make available supporting information such as drawings and photographs.
- 5 Introduce the subject by outlining its content. End in the same way by reminding the audience of the main points discussed.
- 6 Be enthusiastic about the subject.
- 7 Be natural.
- 8 Maintain eye contact with the audience.
- 9 Be prepared for questions during and at the end of the session.
- 10 Involve your audience.

CONCLUSION

The presentation of urban design ideas takes a number of forms depending upon the information to be communicated and to whom. When dealing with the public, such information, whether written or visual, should be simple and direct. Britain is a multi-cultural society where several minority languages are spoken. Projects sited in areas where such languages are spoken should consider the preparation of important project information in the locally spoken minority languages. This is a common feature of most planning work in local authorities. It is an example allied professions and private developers might follow. Drawn communication for the implementation of projects requires precision. Such drawings are needed for the calculation of land areas, volumes of materials and the precise physical location of each element of the project. The preparation of production drawings requires a number of different professional skills. These skills are seldom found in the same person and they are often not found in the same urban design team. Clearly, production drawings should conform to both the spirit and purpose of the project design. It is, therefore, in the interest of those working in the field of urban design to be conversant with the varied forms of maps and drawings used for the purpose of project implementation.

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